

*Beyond the  
Sunset*

HERBERT BOOTH SMITH

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*BEYOND THE SUNSET*



# *Beyond the Sunset*

*FORECASTS OF THE FUTURE LIFE*

*By*

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*New York*

*Chicago*

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*London*

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*Edinburgh*

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New York: 158 Fifth Avenue  
Chicago: 17 North Wabash Ave.  
London: 21 Paternoster Square  
Edinburgh: 99 George Street

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TO MY MOTHER  
*who first allured to brighter  
worlds and then led the way*



## FOREWORD

 HIS little book is just a sheaf of sermons tied together, picked up from the pulpit of the Immanuel Presbyterian Church of Los Angeles. It is a sheaf and not a bouquet. A bouquet of flowers would be a very plain-looking thing if all its posies were of the same color. The studies are all of the same "color," since they all relate to the general theme of the life which follows this. These addresses will, we trust, live together like members of one big family in these pages, in peace and harmony, since they are all related to each other. Relatives sometimes live in an atmosphere of "armed neutrality," but we hope this family circle will do better. We trust the kind reader will be sufficiently attracted to the first member of the household he may meet to wish to be introduced to all the other relatives.

The writer has found a "far-away look" in so many eyes that he has felt that every heart must have its longings for dear ones "over there." "Death is just God's method of colonizing heaven;" and some of us whose fellow-colonists

have been summoned home may find a little comfort, while still dwelling in the far country, to read of the home prepared beyond the river where the surges cease to roll. May God bless these pages as they go on their way, and make them ambassadors of sunshine and messengers of cheer.

H. B. S.

*Los Angeles.*

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# I

## WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE?

*“This is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”—JOHN 17:3.*

EARLY in the afternoon of November 24, 1572, so Boreham tells us, John Knox, the great Scotch reformer, lay dying. He said, as he lifted his three fingers in symbol of the trinity of his body: “Now, for the last time, I commend my spirit, soul and body into Thy hands, O Lord.” About five o’clock, feeling himself nearing the end, he said to his wife, “Go, read where I cast my first anchor.” She needed no more explicit instructions, for he had told her the story time and again. So she read the seventeenth chapter of St. John’s evangel. When she came to the third verse, the words of our text, “This is life eternal,” the dying man started as the great cadences fell on his ear. “Life eternal!”—“It was there,” he said with his last breath, “that I cast my first anchor.”

Now, just as Knox cast his first anchor in the ocean of this wonderful truth, so did our Lord cast His last anchor there. When we meet up with Jesus as He utters these words, He too is on His way to death. Three chapters of the Gospel of

John form the bridge across which Jesus walks from time to eternity. Chapter fourteen is spoken in the intimacy of the upper room. Chapters fifteen, sixteen and seventeen are uttered on the way to the Garden. Then, crossing the brook into chapter eighteen and into the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus finds Himself shortly under arrest. Hence these are *Via Dolorosa* words. They are the utterance of a mighty soul who is giving His valedictory to earth and His salutatory to heaven.

When Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, came out of the Tower of London and saw the scaffold on which he was to be beheaded, he drew from his pocket a Greek Testament and, looking up to heaven, exclaimed: "Now, O Lord, direct me to some passage which may support me through this awful scene." As he opened the book, his eye fell upon this verse: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." He instantly closed the book, saying: "Praised be the Lord. This is sufficient for me and for eternity." So it is sufficient for us today as we journey toward our ending days; as,

*"From the averted Face, beyond the bournes of Space,  
Into the sudden sun, we journey one by one."*

I wonder if it is fair for us to steal one sentence out of that tragic march and feast our souls upon it without paying the price of joining the procession and marching on to the garden. Born, as that sentence was, out of the travail and agony of

a great soul, baptized in tears and blood, our text comes to us. It falls upon the cool night air of that Syrian town; and all unheeding,—the men in their shops and the women in their homes and the children in the streets at play—little do any of them know that out on a suburban road a man was saying something that would live forever. Of course they did not know it. If they had, Rome would have built grandstands along the route of that journey and sold the seats at a high price. Work and play alike would have been dropped to see this strange, unique man. A great speech was born that night—a speech condensed into a sentence—but few heard it. One of those few, however, caught it up and wrote it down and passed it on so that we can listen to it down the centuries. As I hear it first in the distance, then draw closer and take it in hand, I seem to see three great words standing out in bold relief:

First: the important subject: Life Eternal.

Second: the surprising verb: “That they might know.”

Third: the great objective: God as revealed in Christ Jesus.

### *I. The Important Subject: Life Eternal*

When you consider the occasion of these words, you cannot wonder that they were misunderstood. Jesus was about to tear Himself away from a little group of men who would be at a loss which way to turn after He was gone. The most natural thing in the world would be to suppose He was trying to

tell them that He would still be with them. As though He said, "I will pick myself up from the cross after they officially pronounce me dead and will go on living to the end of time." So you do not wonder that one of the common errors of thought has been to identify eternal life with the immortality of the soul, or with the continuance of physical life after death. This confusion, however, which seems so natural to us, because of the poverty of our language, becomes dissipated when we turn to the richness of the Greek tongue.

Both the Old Testament and the New recognize that man is a three-fold being, composed of body, soul and spirit. Now, corresponding to these three phases of being are three Greek words which represent three different kinds of life. There is one word, "*Bios*" (from which we get "Biology"), which represents life on the lowest plane and is most closely related to the animal nature. There is a second word, "*Psuche*," which is found ninety-eight times in the New Testament and which is translated "soul" fifty-seven times and "life" forty-one times. This means life on the second plane, and if I talk about the eternity of this kind of life I mean the immortality of the soul. This was taught long before Jesus by the Greeks, and if this is all the Master meant then He is only a clumsy imitator of heathen originals.

But there is a third word, "*Zoe*," which Jesus took out of its pagan atmosphere and made to do duty in a new environment. It was baptized by Christ for higher service. It is used about 180

times in the New Testament to represent the highest level of spiritual life in the kingdom of God. It means the life of the spirit which Jesus came to secure and offer freely to all men. It is a new thing under the sun: the very life of God mediated to men by Jesus Christ, the channel of blessing. The Bible everywhere assumes the immortality of the soul, the continued conscious existence of the self, and never pronounces it especially blessed or a thing to be grasped after, because everybody has it, good or bad, saint or sinner. The Bible does tell us, however, to "lay hold on eternal life," and this life is in His Son.

Immortality, then, is simply that quality of the soul which exempts it from destruction and keeps it living on; but who would want immortality without eternal life? Not I. Eternal life means not only quantity but quality. It means living not only onward, but upward. The Christian is like a man starting out in an aeroplane. He says: "I am perfectly willing to move on into another state of existence if I can move up into the smile of God at the same time. If, however, I must simply move on to another place at the same level, I shall be just as dissatisfied as the aviator would be whose 'plane refuses to rise.'" So the Christian may say: "I do not need a spirit just to be immortal. My body and soul can be that. I want something more than horizontal blessedness. My patron saint is not Methuselah. Nine hundred and sixty-nine years is not even a fool's paradise. My idea of heaven is bigger than an eternal merry-go-round of treadmill

years. I claim the third story as my abiding-place. My immortal spirit wants eternal life."

*"Our restless spirits yearn for Thee,  
Where'er our changeful lot is cast:  
Glad when Thy gracious smile we see;  
Blest when our faith can hold Thee fast."*

## *II. The Surprising Verb: Life Eternal is to Know*

We shall have a little lesson in biology. What has biology to do with Jesus' great pronouncement? Anybody who has read Henry Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* knows the answer to that question. Modern biology has lighted up for us this central doctrine of the Christian faith and that, too, at the hands of Herbert Spencer. Yes, surprising as it may seem, the scientist has given a definition which stands beside that of Jesus and each throws light upon the other.

Let us go back a little way and see how science leads up to the feet of Jesus. One of the simplest facts of biology is that there are degrees of life. All existence is not on a dead level, but some things are more alive than others; that is to say, they have a fuller and more complete correspondence with environment than others. Take the amoeba, for example. Here is a simple organism with very few correspondences. It is a mere sac of unorganized jelly. Hence it can communicate with only the smallest area of its environment. Take an insect for another example. It has a more complex structure, corresponds with a wider area, has fuller life than the amoeba, and we call it a higher animal.

Come on up to man for a third case, and his body is so much more fully differentiated that he corresponds with a tremendous environment and is therefore the highest form of animal we know. So the law holds all the way up and down the scale, that the degree of life varies with the degree of correspondence. Life becomes richer as we become more sensitive to an ever-widening environment.

Where, then, does death appear, and what is its cause? Death is caused by the failure of an organism to respond to some change in its environment. Those organisms which are able to adjust themselves most readily will live the longest. Thus, a medusa may be tossed ashore by a wave. It suddenly finds itself so out of correspondence with its surroundings that its life must pay the forfeit. Suppose it had been able to crawl (as an eel would have done) back to its old home: then its life would have been spared; but it was not able to adapt itself to its new home. One day I watched the fishermen on the beach as they hauled in the mackerel and the halibut. Just a few gasps of the poor little fish on the stone pier and all was over. It was accustomed to a water environment and here it was on a stone floor, heated by the summer sun. "Why," said the little fish, "I never saw such a world; I won't live here," and forthwith it died. If I, on the other hand, had been suddenly landed on a stone pier, I would have crawled or walked back to an environment of clothing and food and street-cars in which I could live. Take the case of a bird. We know how wonderfully it adapts itself

to the seasons and how, when the cold weather comes, by some instinct, it flies south; and when the warm weather comes, it goes north. Yet there may come a very cold winter when the little bird is tried beyond its power of adaptation. Then it dies. The physical body of man, however, can make wonderful changes. Nature seems to say to man: "Here is the universe. Make yourself at home in it," and man seems to reply: "I'll do that very thing," and he does it. "From Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral strand" man is conformable and comfortable.

As we rise in the scale of life, we rise also in the scale of longevity. The higher an animal is, the longer ought he to be able to live. We are now coming within hailing distance of the scientist's definition of eternal life. In view of what we have already seen, the thing needed for endless life would be a correspondence of very exceptional kind. We must find an organism so high and so complex that at some point of its development it will add on a correspondence which death cannot arrest. We must enter a region where the environment itself is eternal. The environment of the spiritual world is just that. If, therefore, we could get a spiritual organism in perfect correspondence with a perfect spiritual environment, the conditions necessary to eternal life would be satisfied.

We are now ready for Herbert Spencer's definition: "Perfect correspondence would be perfect life. Were there no changes in the environment but such as the organism had adopted changes to

meet, and were it never to fail in the efficiency with which it met them, there would be eternal existence and eternal knowledge." What, then, is eternal life according to science? Answer: Uninterrupted correspondence with a perfect environment. What is eternal life according to Jesus? "This is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Life eternal, then, is to know God; to correspond with God; to commune with God. Life eternal is blessed fellowship with God and perfect correspondence is perfect life. Here science and religion meet and Jesus' definition stands corroborated by the findings of the scholar.

Nature gives us certain intimations along this line. A potted flower set in a room will soon be found leaning as far as possible toward the light. Either the plant has eyes to see or else there is such a strong natural attraction between the two that one cannot live without the other. If you put a climbing plant in the shade, the running vine will find the light, if any is near.

Try an experiment with an acorn. When it germinates, when the shell bursts, the root twists and turns and finds its way into the soil, while the leaves turn toward the sky. There is just a natural affinity which pulls those roots toward the ground; while another affinity pulls the leaves toward the upper air.

In every tree and plant there is a dual life. Without that part of the plant called the roots, the part that grows in the air could not exist. So,

without the leaves and the top, the roots could not grow.

Now, man is just a great big human plant. He has a dual life like the tree. The material part of man seeks naturally the earth; and so we say a man needs a good body first of all. But the spiritual part of man turns toward the sunlight of God, and we ought to learn from the tree and the shrub that the upper story of life is fully as important as the first story. Surely a human being ought to have as much sense as a plant.

It is easy now to answer the question: When do we get eternal life? It is not a hope to be cherished for the future, but an experience to be appropriated now. Henry Vaughan, the seventeenth century mystic, said he saw eternity one night. Brother Lawrence said he made it the best rule of a holy life to practice the presence of God. Well, the man who lives with God has eternal life—has it now. So the question of Easter Sunday should be, not: Shall I live forever, but, am I living now?

*"I stand in the Great Forever,  
I live in the Ocean of Truth,  
And I bask in the golden sunshine  
Of endless love and youth.*

*"Oh, the glory and joy of living!  
To know we are one with God!  
It's an armor of might to the Spirit!  
It's a blossom that crowns the sod!*

*"Thus I stand in the Great Forever  
With Thee—as eternities roll;  
Thy Spirit forsaketh me never;  
Thy love is the home of my soul."*

### III. The Great Objective: God as Revealed in Jesus Christ

Here is the third and last surprise of this wonderful text. Let me put it this way. A man may say: "I know mathematics"—that is business. Another may say: "I know Homer"—that is education. A third may say: "I know President Coolidge"—that is society. But a fourth may say: "I know Jesus Christ"—that is religion; that is Christianity; that is life eternal.

Did it ever occur to you that Paul wrote down his whole confession of faith in six short words in that wonderful letter we call II Timothy? Here it is: "I know whom I have believed." Why, Paul, you must be mistaken? You mean "I know what I have believed," don't you? You mean you know the thirty-nine Articles, the Confession of Faith, the Shorter Catechism. You mean you can say them all off by heart. "No," says Paul, "not at all. I know *whom* I have believed. My religion is a life."

Christianity is strong (as even a learned Jew admitted) because it builds itself about a mighty Personality. Vinet said very truly: "Faith is not believing we are saved; it is believing we are loved." There are three degrees of fellowship: first, the stage we call *law*, represented by St. Peter; second, the degree we call *faith*, represented by St. Paul; third, the degree we call *love*, represented by St. John. Have you taken the third degree which enables you to know you are not only justified and saved but that you are also loved?

*The Three*

How far have you grown into the knowledge and love of God?

One of the things which the great war did for men was to get them out on the open road of acquaintance with God, because the external forms of religion could not be carried on at the battle-front. A common French peasant soldier was asked how he did without a priest for confession at the front, and he replied, "Ah, madame, these things arrange themselves. If there is no priest at hand, I confess directly to the good God and I have come to love the intimacy." As soon as the soldier got acquainted with God he loved Him.

There are mystic degrees in the Christian life, just as there are in our fraternal orders. Some Christians are legalistic; they are Petrine Christians. Then others are creedalistic; they are Pauline Christians. But some others are Christo-mystic, for they believe most of all in personal acquaintance with Jesus Christ. The great saints of the Church are not only third degree Christians, but thirty-third degree lovers of Jesus Christ.

Biology helps out here again. Evolution tells us that by the influence of environment certain aquatic animals have become adapted to living on land. At first they breathed by gills, but as a result of continued effort through generations, they have learned to inhale the air of heaven direct, through the lungs. Is there not a spiritual analogy to this in the doctrine of regeneration? If the frog can be regenerated into a lung-breathing animal, cannot the soul of the Christian develop the ca-

pacity for prayer in the atmosphere or environment of a continually besetting God? It is surely no more wonderful to develop the capacity of fellowship with God than it is to develop the capacity of fellowship with the air.

Augustine was such a man. The beautiful thing about him was not his theology, but his Christology; his fellowship with God through Jesus Christ. Luther was another such man; not Luther the controversialist, but Luther the great praying soul who once said: "I am so busy now that if I did not spend two or three hours every day in prayer, I could not get through." It was by the soul-breathing function of prayer that Luther fed his fellowship with Christ. He could say as the Psalmist did: "All my springs are in thee!" He could also have said in the words of another: "Fellowship is heaven; lack of fellowship is hell." What about Horace Bushnell? He was no unbalanced visionary, and yet he said: "I know Jesus Christ far better than any man in Hartford, and I think if He came along the way, He would arrest Himself and say: 'Here is a man I know.'" It would seem strange to turn from a man like Bushnell, the preacher, to Michael Faraday, the scientist; and yet both men, however they differed in their chosen field of work, knew Jesus. In 1867, when Faraday lay dying, someone whispered in his ear: "What are your speculations?" "Speculations," he answered feebly, "I have none. I am resting on a certainty. I know whom I have believed." Better than he knew the secrets of

Faraday - the man

electro-magnetism, he knew the secret of eternal life; he knew Jesus.

One evening a student came to see Phillips Brooks. The young man was in great perplexity; he had been reading, and found little light. After a while he said: "Mr. Brooks, is conscious fellowship with Jesus Christ a part of Christianity?" The great preacher thought a moment seriously and then answered: "Conscious personal fellowship with Jesus Christ *is* Christianity." Today I take his reply and add to it: Conscious personal fellowship with Jesus Christ is not only Christianity; it is eternal life. That is my text: Eternal life is to know God as He is revealed in Jesus. "Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ."

An old fisherman on the eastern coast of Yorkshire was asked by a visitor whether he believed in fairies as many of his countrymen did. He made the common sense reply that he would not believe in them until he saw them. Then the questioner said: "Don't you believe in anything until you see it? What an unbeliever you are!" The old man was silent a while and then said slowly: "Yes, there is things I believe in that I haven't seed." "Can you tell me one?" "Yes, I believe I know that Jesus Christ died for me." There you have it in the simple words of the Yorkshire fisherman: a personal acquaintance with an invisible Friend, whom, having not seen, he loved.

Then, if what I have been saying is true, you may have eternal life, and have it now, so that

there will be no doubt under heaven of your future. Live forever? Of course you will. What can death do to a soul conscious of a personal fellowship with the Lord of Life? Under such circumstances, death becomes a desirable event. Death is then the condition of further development by releasing the spiritual from the natural and thus making the correspondence between organism and environment more perfect and complete. Science says death is the gate of life, and Scripture says death is gain, and both are biologically and spiritually correct.

When the heathen magistrate spoke to St. Julius he said to him: "Offer sacrifice to the gods and you shall live with us." "To live with you," was the spirited answer, "would be to die, but when I shall have died, then I live." "You are determined, then, to die and not to live?" questioned the magistrate. "I choose to die temporarily that I may live eternally," was the calm reply. What can death do to a life like that? Why, nothing at all but help it on to the heights; on to the "perfect love, all human thought transcending."

## II

### WHAT LIES BEYOND THE SUNSET?

*"If a man die, shall he live again?"—JOB 14:14.*

HE title of our study today is taken from a conversation of Robert Burdette. He stood, one evening, looking out over the blue waters of the Pacific Ocean and, describing his feelings to a friend, said: "I watch the sunset as I look over the rim of the blue Pacific, and there is no mystery beyond the horizon line because I know what is over there. I have journeyed in those lands. Over there, where the sun is just sinking, is Japan. That star is rising over China. In that direction lie the Philippines. I know all that."

Then the preacher turned from earth's geography to heaven's hope and told his friend of another horizon line at the west end of life, and said that although he had never voyaged beyond that line or met anybody who had, yet he knew this land beyond the sunset better than he knew the way home, for as the afternoon sun sank lower, the light of faith shone more brightly, and hence there was light all the way.

There is a certain fascination about living on the Pacific Coast at the west end of America, for we

know that if we journey west of here we reach the east. This is so because the world is round; after the west is done, the east begins again. Follow the sunset far enough and you find sunrise. It is all a kind of symbol of immortality. If you could come to the west end of things and just drop off into space, then you might believe that death ends all; but since you can never come to the end of the universe, probably you can never come to the end of a human life.

When our soldier boys "went west" I am sure they were surprised to wake up and find themselves in the east. Death was the kind Pullman sleeper which gave their tired bodies a ride in the dark; but when they woke up the next morning, they could see from the flora and fauna outside the train-windows that they were in a new country. The time had changed during the night and pretty soon, when they pulled into the great terminal station and looked for the name, they saw and read thus: "In my Father's house are many mansions."

What lies beyond the sunset? Oh, how eagerly men have been asking that question ever since the beginning of time! We are all relatives of Christopher Columbus and Marco Polo and Peary and Scott. There is something of the explorer and the discoverer in us all.

Some practical person may come along and say: "Why not let well enough alone? You have one life, haven't you? 'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.' Why not stay in the sunshine and refuse to go voyaging off in the darkness?"

GWT

When your friend dies and you accompany the body to the grave, that is all you can do. Don't try to burrow through the ground to see if you will come out on the other side of the earth. Quit asking questions. Don't set an interrogation point up at either end of the grave. Mind your own business. Write the epitaph. Pay the undertaker. Thank the minister. Then quit."

Well, that all sounds very sensible and yet—and yet what? And yet the dreams and hopes and fears of men will not stop here. If you simply roll a great stone to the grave of Jesus and leave it there, refusing to question, as Thomas Jefferson did, you will eliminate much of the art and poetry and music and philosophy of the world.

Here was Job, away back in the early days, when these primitive Semites believed that the members of a family or tribe who were united by blood relationship were united in the same way to their God. He was their father and shared their sacrificial meal. But when men quit thinking of God as a tribal chieftain and began to regard Him as a heavenly Father, then they knew that communion with Him must be a matter of spirit and not of food.

One day Job feels himself growing old, and he wonders what will become of him. As he shudders with dread at the thought of being excommunicated from God's presence and condemned to the shadowy existence of Sheol he makes the great venture. We cannot realize how extraordinary was this guess or hope. That a man should dare to believe that life traveled on beyond death! Oh, it

was a daring question in those days, and that strange, lone question-mark flung out against the ancient sky is our text today. This text bridges the centuries, for the same query that was on the lips of Job is being revived today.

Twenty-five or thirty years ago men did not care. When Sir George Adam Smith was writing at the opening of the century he could say: "In the thinking of civilized man there has been for years a steady ebb from the shores of another life." What John Ruskin called "the heaven-light" was fading out of the life of the average man and he became satisfied with life's short day from sunrise to sunset. But the Great War changed all this. Men are asking questions about the beyond more eagerly today, I believe, than ever before. What men want are lamp-lighters to go along the dark highways that stretch beyond the sunset and light up the night. The boulevard is so dark. Perchance many highwaymen are there. The soul fears to speed away into the gloom. If any lamp-lighter can come along and touch one by one the dark lamps into centers of illumination, he will have the gratitude of all who live on the eastern side of the sunset line.

I would fain be such a lamp-lighter. I would try to set three lamps burning. I would answer Job's question in the affirmative. I would say, "Yes, I believe dead men live again, and I believe it for three reasons:

First—the nature of man;  
Second—the character of God;  
Third—the experience of Christ."

That I have learned.

These are the three lamps I offer today, and if they shed any light along your pathway I shall be glad.

### *I. The Nature of Man*

Let us begin on the lowest ground. Close up your Bible and forget all about Jesus of Nazareth. Confine yourself simply to man. Go back to the days of Plato and Aristotle and you find the argument there. Everyone who has read the *Phædo* knows how far on the way to glory this thought carried the ancient Greek thinkers. It is a difficult argument to put in a few words, but I abridge it from the statement of Dr. Jones, of Bournemouth.

Man is a moral being. He is separated by a great gulf from the brute creation. He feels the pressure of duty. Some great authoritative voice says to him: "Thou shalt." Kant calls it the "categorical imperative." Now, just as soon as you recognize this response of man to a moral imperative, you have made him immortal, according to Professor Seth, for the moral law does not belong to the world of time and sense. Where does it come from? Wordsworth says that "duty is the stern daughter of the voice of God." If man is subject to laws issued in eternity, then he must be a citizen of eternity, for it is not fair to subject a man to the laws of a country of which he is not a citizen. The laws of the Argentine Republic do not bother me mightily, for I am a citizen of this city. So we come back at last to what Paul said about our citizenship being in heaven; and we look for a better country, that is, an heavenly.

Here is a man, for example, going out on some great enterprise. Perhaps he is a soldier leaving cherished ambitions for the trenches of Flanders. Or perhaps he is a missionary turning away from the refinements and affection of home and starting for a foreign land. Whoever he is, he is crushing self under foot and following the beckoning of some invisible hand. He says to his despairing friends:

*"I hear a voice you cannot hear  
That will not let me stay;  
I see a hand you cannot see  
That beckons me away."*

So he goes and flings his precious life away, either on the battlefield or on the mission field. Is he done for when he falls? If there is any justice in the universe, may we not expect that the same Voice which called him out will call him in when his day's work is done? No king ever sends his servants a-warring at their own charges. He heard a call that his pet dog or his favorite horse did not hear. Will he not also go to a home that they cannot know?

This thought has been the consolation and cheer of men long before Christ brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. You remember what Socrates said: "It would be wrong for me not to be grieved to die if I did not think I should go to wise and good deities and dwell with men who have departed from this life and are better than any who are here." Euripides almost chuckled as he thought how surprised we would be if we

found that life—the present life—were death and death were living. Even Goethe had to say that he agreed with Lorenzo di Medici that they are dead for this life also who hope for no other. That was a memorable day in the Roman Senate when Julius Cæsar, mightiest warrior of the time, argued that death ends all and Cicero, the mightiest thinker of the day, argued that death is really the beginning of life.

It is a far cry from this ancient world to the present day, but the one reason for this series of addresses is that the world-old longing is appearing in such definite form today. The instinct for eternity is just as strong as it ever was. Instinct is a wonderful thing. What is an instinct? It is a hereditary constitutional tendency or impulse which begins to act automatically when aroused by the proper stimulus and which finds in its environment the appropriate means of satisfaction. Look how it is in the animal world. The bee builds a honeycomb according to mathematics and architectural principles. How? We answer: "By instinct." Ants organize and carry on a complex social order which reminds us of human government and society. How? Instinct. Wasps are wont to sting spiders and caterpillars in their chief nerve centers, so as to paralyze them, with a skill which seems to involve a knowledge of anatomy, so that Romanes called it the most remarkable instinct in the world. Birds—how wonderful they are! The golden plover, for example, breeds in summer in Arctic North America and then drives

itself in a marvelous flight of upwards of 10,000 miles to winter in Patagonia. Tell me, how does it know the way? Day and night it wings its way over the trackless ocean and the strange land, driven and guided by the mysterious power we call "instinct."

Man is also a creature of instincts. He is born with his nature packed full of them. Deep down in the subconscious mind they have been storing themselves up for centuries and out of the souls of our ancestors they pour their deposit of hope or fear into your soul and mine. Here are buried continents of desire and longing in your life and mine, and out of this great deep there rises up—like a mountain-top appearing as an island—the passion for endless life on beyond the sunset hour.

Consider, now, if instincts are prophecies and if they represent the fundamental needs of life, why is not man's instinct for immortality just as true as the instinct of bird or bee or ant in their lower sphere? Can it be that instinct has all of a sudden begun to play us false? You remember how Tennyson cried out one night, thinking of Hallam: "Great God, where's Arthur? If I thought God had implanted this longing in our hearts just to torment us, I would bury my head tonight in a chloroformed handkerchief and end it all." And not only believers like Tennyson, but unbelievers like Thomas H. Huxley feel the same pull of tomorrow on the soul. Huxley, you know, claimed to be an agnostic. He invented the name, and yet, in 1883, when nearly sixty years of age, he wrote:

Huxley

“It is a curious thing that I find my dislike to the thought of extinction increasing as I get older. It flashes across me at all sorts of times with a sort of horror that in 1900 I shall probably know no more than I did in 1800. I had rather be in hell.” And in the lines cut on his tombstone, written by his wife and approved by himself, there is a faint suggestion of this larger hope:

*“Be not afraid, ye waiting hearts that weep,  
For so He giveth His beloved sleep;  
And if an endless sleep He wills, so best.”*

Men have an instinctive longing for the great adventure. William Blake, the painter-poet, as he lay dying, said “he was going to that country he had all his life wished to see,” and just before he died, he burst into singing of the things he saw. Charles Kingsley said, facing death, “God forgive me, but I look forward to it with an intense and reverent curiosity.”

An instinct is any part of our spiritual capital which has not been contributed by education or revelation. Our two chief instincts are God and immortality. When the Athenians went out to Eleusis twice a year, in March and September, and held a solemn function, Cicero says it was not only that they might live happily, but might die with a fairer hope.

A very remarkable testimony showing the new view of death has come across the seas to us from an eminent surgeon whose name is well known to the world. He told a friend that before the war he

was a confirmed doubter. He searched men's bodies for some proof of the existence of a soul, but found none. He fell back on two codes: that might is right and that the strongest law is self-preservation. The war, however, changed him. He discovered altruism. He saw men and women paying the last full measure of devotion for an ideal and he began to learn new respect for the nature of man. He took off his hat to humanity, so to speak. He learned, too, that there was a force stronger than any law of the material world —the force of the spirit. The first time he saw a battlefield cleaned up under the stars, he seemed to see above the broken bodies radiant angels trying to tell him that the death of the body was a secondary thing; that it was not how a man died, but what he died for that mattered.

So we come back from the moonlit battlefield to the query of our text: "If a man die, shall he live again?" Yes, by a man's greatness I know he will.

## *II. But in the Second Place I Know it also from the Character of God*

Do you remember those beautiful lines in Whittier's *Snowbound* beginning:

"Alas for him who never sees  
The sun shine through his cypress-trees!  
Who hopeless lays his dead away,  
Nor looks to see the breaking day  
Across the mournful marbles play!  
Who has not learned in hours of faith  
That truth—to flesh and sense unknown—  
That life is always lord of death,  
And love can never lose its own!"



This last line gives us the point of departure for our second argument. Love can never be defrauded. Love makes the sun shine through the cypress-trees. Love sees daybreak even in the cemetery's gloom. Love is independent of undertakers and grave-diggers and pallbearers. Love says: "Do what you will with the body. I possess something you can never bury."

Let us turn back to the Old Testament and see just how the Jews came to their doctrine of a future life. Ask the average person what the Old Testament teaches about immortality and he will tell you that immortality is conspicuous by its absence from (or at least by its rarity in) the Old Book. This statement is true if you mean a worked out doctrine of immortality; but it is not true if you mean the basic thought on which immortality rests, which is the character of God. The special Old Testament fact to which the doctrine of immortality attaches itself is God's willingness to enter into personal relationship with individuals. God was willing to call men His friends. Enoch walked with God, and Abraham was called "the friend of God." The relation of the soul to God was so close that the idea of the severance of this relation could not be tolerated. God's love is unchanging, and when God loves, He loves forever. If death can come along and snatch away a friend of God, then death must be stronger than God. This was an unthinkable proposition. If God was stronger than death, He would see to it that His relationship with His friends continued

beyond death. Hence you get the fact of immortal life.

This was not Christian immortality, but it was Jewish immortality. Let me illustrate. Take the radiant hope of the sixteenth Psalm. The Psalmist is talking about himself when he says: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy beloved one to see corruption (or the pit); thou wilt show me the path of life." God was not going to have His comrade stolen from Him. Take again the cry of Habakkuk: "Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God? We shall not die." Or, again, take those beautiful words of Psalm 73: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? . . . My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." Then, to cap the climax, take the precious words of Jesus which ratify and confirm the hopes of the Old Testament saints: "My Father, which gave them me is greater than I and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." There, you see, Jesus confirms the words of Whittier with which we began: "Love"—that is, Almighty Love—"can never lose its own." And Paul adds his glorious doxology: "I am persuaded that neither death nor life . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God."

*The Bible*

O ye ancient Hebrew people, the world must give you credit for the contribution you have made to the immortal hope! You built your faith on the bedrock foundation of the character of God. Because you knew that God was good and true and just, you knew your future was secure. And so

modern a thinker as John Fiske agrees with you, saying as he does: "For my part, I believe in the immortality of the soul, not in the sense in which I accept the demonstrable truths of science, but as a supreme act of faith in the reasonableness of God's work."

At the close of a certain meeting of ministers, one of them came forward and asked the speaker if he had time to listen to a story. Yes, he had. This was the tale in brief: "Many years ago there came into our home a bundle of heaven in the form of a big, healthy baby boy. There was no evidence that he was not in perfect health, but when he was about three years old a subtle disease fastened itself upon him. All that the family doctor could do availed nothing; then a specialist was suggested. We followed instructions faithfully, but he, too, was baffled. We brought our baby home and watched him grow thinner every day. One day, when the physician was present, he reached for baby's pulse and it was gone. He listened for baby's heart-beat, but it was still. Then our baby's eyes fluttered and the little chin dropped. 'The baby is dead,' said the doctor as kindly as he could. Any father knows the stab of that hour, but (said the minister), I could not give him up. I called to my wife to bring warm blankets. I tore open my own clothing. I lifted the limp form of my baby and put him over my heart. My wife wrapped us in the blankets. I held my baby there nine hours." For a few seconds the minister's lips quivered, and then he said: "My baby is now A

twenty-three years old, a senior in college, and is doing a wonderful work for Christ." The brother minister stood aghast as he looked at him. The boy had been saved by the glowing heart of a father whose love would not let him go. That is a picture of what God does to His children: He never lets go.

### *III. I Know it also from the Experience of Christ*

Those of you who have read Goethe's *Faust* will recall that Faust had reached such despair of existence that he was ready to poison himself. Before he can put into execution this sad determination, however, the light of Easter Day breaks and the sound of Easter bells is heard ringing out the message: "Christ is risen." At the last moment the hand of the destroyer is stayed. The chorus with its Easter message restores to Faust some hope and faith in life.

There may be some Fausts who read these lines. At least there may be some who are still in despair so far as my first two points are concerned. They appreciate what has been said about the dignity of man and the character of God, but it doesn't satisfy them. Why does it not satisfy? Ah, I know why without asking them. Because both of these are inferences, guesses, theories. What they want is something stronger than a "peradventure" to build their hope upon. They want the solid ground of historic fact. Here they are answered by the resurrection of Jesus. Now the joy bells can ring. At last they know in Whom they have believed.

I propose to light the third lamp as we stand beside the empty, open tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea. That tomb has turned the question-mark of my text into an exclamation point! Come here, Job. Make a journey out of the land of Uz to the land of Judea. I want to show you something. You asked, I believe, once upon a time, whether, if a man died, he would live again. Well, I will answer your question. A dead man was put into this grave about four or five o'clock one Friday afternoon. The stone door was shut and sealed and guarded by Roman soldiers. By Sunday morning He was gone. Look at the grave now and answer your own question. What do you think? What? No, I am not talking about other graves, but this one. Yes, you must admit that in this one case, at least, a dead man has lived again. Yes, the question-mark has changed to an exclamation point; the dirge of doubt into an anthem of joy: "I know that my redeemer liveth!"

You see the difference between theory and fact. Up to the time of Columbus men had been saying: "It looks as though if somebody would sail out yonder toward the west he might find a new world." Columbus went and did the thing they were theorizing about and came back to say: "Yes, there is a new world out there. I know, because I have been there." Up to the time of Commodore Peary men had been saying: "It seems as though so-and-so must be true at the North Pole, but, of course, nobody knows." Peary, however, went out and dared the unknown terrors of ice and snow

and came back to say: "Such-and-such is the case at the North Pole. I know, because I have been there."

Up to the time of Jesus, men had been saying that man was too big to die and God was too strong to let him die. They said: "It looks as though the gate of death opened into sunlight beyond the dark intermission, but excuse us from making the experiment. Somebody else may write Q.E.D. at the bottom of the page. We wish we knew, and yet we won't go ourselves." Jesus said: "I will go. Give me a cross to mount on and step over from." And so He went, brave Explorer that He was, a thousand times braver than Columbus or Peary either. So He went on alone, for none was found willing to accompany Him. Then He came back and said: "Yes, it is true. All that those Old Testament worthies hoped for is fact. I know, because I have been there."

And Jesus, my hearers, not only went down the dark avenue, but there, in the Land of the Unknown Future, He lighted the great lamp of certainty and left it burning. And it has been burning ever since! Moreover, it will continue to burn until the last Christian pilgrim has made his way home by its welcome light.

Jesus of Nazareth might be defined, if you want to give Him a new name, as the Man-Who-Wouldn't-Stay-Dead. There have been mysterious characters all along the pages of history who were said to have eluded death. There was the cult of Osiris in Egypt, contemporary with Christ, for ex-

ample. The myth tells of a fierce conflict between Osiris and his conquering foe, but he is restored to life through the efforts of his sister Isis and his slayer finally conquered. The myth is supposed to depict the successful struggle of man against his great enemy, death, who is now no longer to be feared since the heroic divinities, Isis and Osiris, have conquered the foe and provided through their cult a sure victory for mortals.

I am glad, however, that our faith rests on a stronger basis than that of myth. The resurrection of Jesus, strange and unusual as it was, rests on so strong a basis of historic certainty that, as someone has said, it can be invalidated only by destroying the foundations of all human testimony.

Modern science is coming to appreciate the resurrection of Jesus from a new point of view. Evolution has taught us to estimate the value of life by the standard of survival power. The ability to resist death is a proof of fitness to live. The risen Christ thus becomes the great hero of the race in the struggle for existence. The Greek hero, Theseus, slew the bloody Minotaur and ended forever the sacrifice of Athenian youth. The Anglo-Saxon hero, Beowulf, triumphed over monsters of the fens and freed his people from disease. But Jesus, the heroic Chieftain, triumphed over death itself and thus has become the Hero par excellence, the Hero of the Open Grave.

There may be one last question lingering in some one's mind. "Suppose Jesus did journey on beyond the sunset, what good does that do me? How

can I get by the sentinel? He was the Son of God. My son is a son of man; what about him? Will the door of the grave yield to me or my loved one as it did to Him?" My brother, my sister, I can only bring you the answer of Paul. He said that Jesus was just the leader of the procession of glorious ones. He was the firstfruits of them that slept, and you and I, if we fall asleep in Him, shall join the great army of victors and enter in through the gates of the city into a home whose builder and maker is God.

*"When Christ thought to tell His love to the world,  
He said to the throng before Him:  
'The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep,'  
And away to the cross they bore Him.*

*"When God sought a king for His people for aye,  
He went to the grave to find Him:  
And a Shepherd came back, Death dead in his grasp,  
And a following flock behind Him.*

*"O love of the sheep, O life from the dead,  
O strength of the faint and the fearing;  
A Shepherd is King and His Kingdom will come,  
And the day of His coming is nearing."*

### III

## THE NECESSITY OF IMMORTALITY

*“He hath set eternity in their heart.”—ECCLESIASTES 3:11.*

HY is man the most miserable creature in God's universe?" The question was asked by Lamennais, the founder of the most religious school of thinkers in modern France. What think you was the answer? It is "because he has one foot in the finite and the other in the infinite and is thereby torn asunder, not by four horses, as in the horrible old times, but between two worlds."

The sentence of the Frenchman comes to mind as we read the Book of Ecclesiastes. Here is an ancient pessimist going out in search of the highest good. As he trudges from place to place only to meet with fresh disappointment at every turn, he certainly is a pitiable figure. First he goes to the school where Wisdom utters her voice, but the highest good has no place in the curriculum. Then he turns to the garden where Pleasure spreads her lures, but Good is not found on the gay white way. Having failed both in school and garden, he turns to the market where Business is the order of the day, but Good is not for sale at any shop. Now, by the time he has gotten over the shock of his third disappointment; by the time he has gotten

down to the eleventh verse of the third chapter of the book, the Preacher seems to discover why failure has met him everywhere. School and garden and market are all inadequate because man is too big for them. They are not built on the dimensions of the Eternal, but he is. They are made out of mud and stone, but man is routed through to the stars. God has set eternity in his heart. God has made him a citizen of two worlds. Heaven lies about him, not only in his infancy, but every day. Man soon learns that one world at a time is not enough for him and, like a spoiled child, he cries for two. Don't blame him! He can't help it. God wrote "tomorrow" down in big letters on his heart to keep him from being satisfied with today.

The visitor to Bruges is shown an old patrician mansion on the corner of one of the ancient quays, on the beams and pediment of which the following fine device may be read: "Within me there is more." I suppose the legend is an invitation to the chance passerby not to rest content with the surface appearance which may be dilapidated and worn, but to be sure to come in and survey the treasures within the walls. Every mortal man might wear the same inviting words inscribed on his body.

"To whom it may concern: This is to certify that I am more than I seem to be. Regard me not merely as a head to hang a hat on; a body to put a suit of clothes on; feet to tie shoes on. Within me there is more.

Beyond what you, stranger, can discern with the natural eye, God has written that mysterious word which gives me that far-away look in my eyes. Eternity is in my heart. I'm but a stranger here. Heaven is my home. You behold before you a dissatisfied pilgrim, stopping for the night but going on in the morning."

It is a significant fact that the earliest records we have of the human race show us man with the eternal hunger in his heart. If you go back to the beginning of Egyptian history you find it there. The great task of each Egyptian king was to provide for himself a proper place of burial. A copy of the funeral ritual was deposited in the case with every mummy. This book contained the whole series of pilgrimages of the soul which it was to accomplish in the various divisions of the underworld. Dr. Budge, who is one of the authorities on this subject, says that one of the first things which forces itself upon the mind of the reader of old Egyptian literature is the frequency of allusions to the future life. These writers tacitly assume that those who have lived here have renewed their youth in the sunshine land beyond the grave.

If you turn from the Egyptians to the Greeks, you will find the candle of hope burning faintly. It is not the arc light of the Gospels, but a faint gleam which refused to be blown out. Homer tells us that Menelaus was not ordained to die, but that the immortal gods would convey him to the Elysian Plain where life is easiest for men. "No snow is there, nor yet great storm, nor any rain; but ocean

always sendeth forth its breezes to blow cool on men."

So, too, we people of the twentieth century still have the writing on our hearts—and we are looking forward to new Pasadena, new Los Angeles, new Baltimore, new New York. As Percy Ainsworth said years ago: "By what authority do we translate that word 'Heaven' into 'Jerusalem'? I prefer to call it 'Birmingham.'" Yes, we are getting ready for the new Los Angeles which is written on our hearts better and fairer even than our City of the Angels here below. Let us begin now to get ready for its white citizenship. As quaint old John Donne wrote:

*"Since I am coming to that holy room  
Where, with the choir of saints forevermore,  
I shall be made thy music; as I come  
I tune the instrument here at the door,  
And what I must do then, think here before."*

### *I. The Inequalities of Life Demand Immortality*

I stood, the other day, in a room, gazing intently at Munkacsy's picture of Christ before Pilate. There in the distance is the howling rabble crying for the prisoner's death. The lawyer for the prosecution stands between Jesus and Pilate, trying to sway the Roman magistrate to sign the death warrant. There on the throne of power, backed by the Roman arms, sits Pontius Pilate. I gazed as never before at the quiet dignity of Jesus as He stands unmoved amid the farce and shame of it all and I said to myself: "He bore all this for me—in

*Philosophy*

the early dawn of that Good Friday—all this for me!" Now then, I face the man who believes in one world only and I say to him: "What sort of world is this, anyhow, with Pilate on the throne and Jesus on the pavement? Pilate gets the crown and Jesus gets the cross. Socrates gets the hemlock and Joan of Arc the burning at the stake. Lincoln and Garfield and McKinley die by the hand of an assassin and some scapegrace, breaking his mother's heart, lives on. The girl in the gutter dies a death of shame and her betrayer moves in a circle of high society. What sort of world is it? I tell you if one world satisfies you, it doesn't satisfy me. If you tell me this is God's only chance, then I tell you I change my ideas of God. Suicide is sane philosophy if God's one-story apartment house has no upper room. I have been willing to live and toil down here on the ground floor because I thought there was an elevator, but if you tell me that I am all dressed up, morally speaking, with nowhere to go, then my soul undresses in despair."

Come back with me to the good old Book and let us see. Here we come upon an interesting situation. When we first meet the Jews on the field of history, they were content with one world. They believed so thoroughly in a God of justice that they instinctively felt that rewards and punishments would all be meted out in this life. The Book of Proverbs, for example, was written from this point of view. You know how full of homely, practical sayings it is, but you cannot use it as a text-book on immortality. Its dimensions are limited. There

is no grand sweep of faith beyond the sunset. Nowhere in pre-exilic literature will you find a doctrine of future rewards or punishments. All the ancient Jew wanted was the immortality of his clan. If his children were left behind him to perpetuate his name, that was enough. Here is the explanation, I think, of the pessimism of the Book of Ecclesiastes. There are certain sections of that book which I hesitate to read in a Christian pulpit because their philosophy is not Christian, but pagan. Why was this Old Testament preacher so blue, so cynical? It was precisely because this one-world, one-room scheme of life was breaking down. It would not stand the strain of facts. The preacher was honest—we will say that for him—and he saw that wickedness was not always punished in this life nor was virtue always rewarded. It was enough to make him cynical. What he needed was the faith to take a leap in the dark and to dimly guess that there might be an Equalization Bureau in a world somewhere out of sight. Alas, he lacked the telescope—the long look of faith. He had only the microscope to look at things close at hand; and after surveying the landscape o'er he ordered a pair of blue glasses and wore them the rest of his life.

But a better day came. Here was one of the blessings of war. When the people were carried away into exile, righteous and unrighteous alike being overwhelmed, thoughtful men said one to another: "Look here. Something is wrong with our traditional belief. Fair wages are not being

paid. Something is wrong with the bookkeeping. Shall we find fault with the Bookkeeper or maybe —maybe He has a hidden ledger up-stairs." So Job broke out in that great cry which we have in the nineteenth chapter of his book: "I know that my redeemer (vindicator) liveth, and after my skin hath been thus destroyed, yet without my flesh shall I see God." Job here rises to the conviction that he can appeal his case to a higher court and the judgment of this lower court will be reversed. He made the great venture of investing his trust in a world to come. This new hope is seen increasingly through the Apocrypha until it finally comes out in radiant certainty in the teaching of our blessed Lord, who brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

We have now reached the point where this ancient logic is repeated in the twentieth century. The men on the battlefields of France had the same experience as Job. One of them said to a New York preacher as he pointed to a mound back near the camp: "Now, what did he get out of it? Rain—cold—pneumonia—rats—vermin—rusty wire—gas—fire—grenades—what did he get out of it? The women and children here in France, yes, he saved them; but they did not have a chance to thank him or to love him. You need not tell me that a good God will refuse to make it up to him. I never thought of it until I came to the trenches. Now I know that there is a life beyond, and that this boy will meet his father and his mother." Another of these lads was asked how things were far-

ing with him at the front. He gazed apologetically at the mire which rose to his knees and said: "How do things fare with me? I sleep in mud, I bathe in blood; but my soul, sir, is in the stars."

Now, if this is true in France, it is true in California, it is true in all the world, that the unpaid accounts here, these balances that are carried over beyond the cemetery gate, are going to be paid somewhere. God is never going to take the bankrupt law. He will preserve the moral credit of the universe. He will settle all just accounts, though some of them may seem long overdue.

The story goes that a certain infidel farmer sent the editor of a weekly newspaper the following letter:

"Sir, I have been trying an experiment. I have a field of Indian corn which I ploughed on Sunday. I planted it on Sunday. I did all the cultivating on Sunday. I gathered the crop on Sunday, and on Sunday hauled it to my barn, and I find that I have more corn per acre than any of my neighbors this October."

What a triumphant sneer lay behind those words of the skeptic! The editor simply returned the letter with this footnote:

"N. B. God does not always settle His accounts in October."

You remember Browning's patriot who was taken out shackled in the rain and storm to his death—the same man who, only a year before, had entered the town on a pathway of roses. He

solaces himself, however, with the thought of heaven:

*"Thus I entered and thus I go,  
'Tis God shall repay—I am safer so."*

This thought of the great roll-call yonder, the great settlement of accounts, ought to help us to hold on our way bravely 'till the day dawn and the shadows flee away. Schiller advises us to do so:

*"Haste not, rest not, calmly wait.  
Meekly bear the storms of fate.  
Duty be thy polar guide—  
Do the right whate'er betide;  
Haste not, rest not, conflicts past,—  
God shall crown thy work at last."*

## *II. The Imperfections of Life Demand Immortality*

There are sermons in tombstones sometimes. I lived as a lad in Baltimore, just opposite a stone-cutter's yard. I used to watch the men as they polished the shafts and pediments with scrupulous care, day after day. One day I saw a strange kind of monument. The base was all right and the shaft began well, but it broke off abruptly about half the usual height. It looked as though somebody had let it fall and break. I asked my mother about it and she said that the monument was intended to stand at the grave of an incomplete life. Perhaps it would be the grave of some young man or woman who began life's journey auspiciously but was suddenly cut off, leaving the work with the ragged edge because sunset came too soon.

Well, there are many such broken lives! Metchnikoff says we ought to live to the age of 150 years and if we did so we would have an appetite for death which would be just as instinctive as all the other natural appetites of life. But we do not do this, as a matter of fact. Death is usually an interruption instead of a peroration. How few people death finds sitting ready dressed to meet him! How few have life's bundle all tied up and their work done! How many die with their everyday clothes on, right in the midst of things! We start to build the house and before we get to the second floor death stops us. We start to sing the song but we never get to the chorus. We start to grow in grace, aiming at perfection, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; but long before we reach the goal we lie down to die as amateur Christians, freshmen in the school of Christ. How few valedictorians there are in the University of Jesus! Most lives are only torsos—fragments—and this is what leads the poet to say: "On earth the broken arcs, in heaven the perfect round."

Just think of the stunted lives of earth! Robert Murray McCheyne, the man who from his pulpit moved Scotland closer to heaven, died at twenty-nine. Think what a power for God he would have been had he lived! Twenty-nine years of consecration and then death! Raphael died when he was thirty-five. Look at his Madonna and then ask God whether He had decorating for him to do in heaven, if that was why He took him home. Beethoven was never satisfied with his work; he

said that his most polished symphony was but an empty echo of the music he heard in his dreams. Perhaps he is writing music today for the angel choir to sing.

All the great Latin poets died young. Catullus and Lucretius died before reaching middle age, and Virgil was only fifty-one. He died despondent because he thought his work undone and begged that they burn the *Æneid* since he couldn't complete it. He called it a piece of lunacy that he even consented to undertake so great a task. Carlyle wrote a great deal and yet he said: "Worlds yet remain unwritten." Albert Barnes stood one day looking off over the valleys of the Oriskany and the Mohawk, thinking of the people who had marched west in the fifty years since he graduated from college and said: "I should like to live one thousand years. Greater things far are to be done in the future and I should like to have a hand in them." John Percyfield said he could anticipate immortality with joy, for it would take eternity to do all the beautiful things he had in mind to do. Think of Thomas Chatterton, the boy genius, who died in a London garret at the age of eighteen. He wrote such marvellous poetry that he had to deceive the publishers to get them to use it. Some well-known man put his name to it and they published it, but he afterwards confessed that he did not write it. The wonderful boy was starving to death in a London garret, but as starvation was too slow, he helped it on with a dose of arsenic. Great God in Heaven! I wonder where Chatterton

is writing now. If he could do what he did at the age of eighteen, why did he not have a chance at life? Do you not think maybe a just God will let him finish his little book of poems somewhere else? Then there was Victor Hugo. He told the world that although he had been writing for half a century, yet he had not said the thousandth part of what was in him. "When I go down to my grave," he said, "I can say I have finished my day's work but I cannot say that I have finished my life, for my day's work will begin again the next morning." There, too, was Immanuel Kant. Read De-Quincy's description of his "Last Days." What a pathetic figure he is, as he gives way to the infirmities of age. He left a great system of philosophy, to be sure, but the work he left undone was so great that men have been trying to finish his uncompleted work ever since. So we might go on with the life stories of scores of others, but they would all emphasize the same thought that the unattained ideals, the stars our wagons have never reached, are in themselves a prophecy of completion and attainment somewhere else.

*"Let me not die before I've done for Thee  
My earthly work, whatever it may be.  
Call me not hence with mission unfulfilled.  
Let me not leave my space of ground untilled.  
Impress this truth upon me: that not one  
Can do my portion that I leave undone."*

### *III. The Bereavements of Life Demand Immortality*

Let us hear the heart speak before we close our

sermon today. The three points roughly represent the three component parts of our personality—intellect, emotion and will. The first—the demand for justice—is the demand of a reasonable mind. The second—the demand for a chance to finish what we have begun—is the appeal of the unconquered will. The third is the cry of the heart for comfort; and since the heart is biologically older than the brain, it certainly has just as much right to be heard in its demands as any other pleader at the bar. As Tennyson said, when his cold reason became perplexed with arguments, his heart stood up and answered: “I have felt.”

You know how it is when the noises of the day die down into the quiet of the eventide. You can hear the quiet ticking of the clock on the mantelpiece though you had not heard it at all in the flurry of the busy day. So it is in human life, is it not? We can hear the throb of our own hearts and the whispers of God in the soul when the garish day of life is hushed and the eventide of sorrow has come. How loud the heart speaks then! We can almost count the throbs, and I think we have just as much right to listen to the sermons of tears as we have to listen to the choruses of smiles.

In the early days of Christianity when the light of the immortal hope was just beginning to play about the sorrows of men, we can discover the change even in the cemeteries. There was a Phœnician colony in Sidon, some of the tombs of which have been uncovered. On one of these the

principal decoration was a garland of flowers surrounded by a cross and a cock. The cock, to the ancients, was a "herald of the dawn" and apparently symbolized the hope of a future life. It makes one feel a certain tender sympathy for those sorrowing Phœnicians who laid their loved one away so many years ago and who wrote in that crude way above the tomb that death was not the end of life and love could never lose its own. We have all read about the Eleusinian mysteries of the Greeks. What were they? Cicero gives us an answer. The custom was for the Athenians to go out to Eleusis twice a year, in March (as the life of the year springs) and in September (as it fades) and there to hold a solemn function, a kind of religious retreat. Why? Cicero says, in order that they might not only live happily but that they might die with a fairer hope. Human hearts in Athens and in Sidon were pretty much what human hearts are today; sensitive plants reaching out their tendrils for dews of comfort along life's parching way.

*Anecdotes*

Carlyle, the man who so neglected his wife while she lived, was plunged into heart-breaking agony at the thought of never seeing her again when he heard the news that she had died suddenly while he was absent from home. He compared the white tombstone to a mournful milestone ever receding in the dim distance to remind him how many sad miles he had journeyed alone. Yet when the first paroxysm of his grief was over, he spoke of the meeting of friends in the future life as a thing not impossible at all. He came to believe in what he

called the "Everlasting Yea." Colonel Ingersoll is well known as one whose views on the great facts of God and immortality were far from being Christian. Mr. Bryan, when a young man, wrote to Ingersoll asking him for a statement of his views on these two subjects. His secretary replied that the Colonel was not at home, but enclosed a copy of a speech which covered the question. Mr. Bryan read the same with eagerness and found that his ideas were about as follows: "I do not say that there is no God. I simply say that I do not know. I do not say that there is no life beyond the grave. I simply say that I do not know." Mr. Bryan said he never could understand how anyone could find pleasure in taking from any human heart a living faith and substituting therefor the cold and cheerless doctrine of: "I do not know."

I do not understand it: do you? If somebody will come along who has a better and more convincing and more comforting argument for the future life than Jesus of Nazareth has; if somebody can surpass the fourteenth chapter of John; if somebody can improve upon the twenty-fourth chapter of Luke and the fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians—why, let them submit their claims and suppositions. But until they can give us something better, let them keep quiet! Harry Lauder knows the truth of what I have just said. When the news came to him, on the 28th of December, 1915, that his son, Captain John Lauder of the Argyll Highlanders, was killed, his brain almost reeled. For days he lived in agony of soul and

then he said he suddenly discovered that peace and comfort lay in store for him in the use of something in which he had always believed: in God and a future life. "I suddenly realized (he said) that I had not seen the last of John and that we were sure to meet in another world." That thought was healing balm to his soul and he began to think of John as just gone on a long journey, waiting by appointment somewhere for his mother and father to come to him.

It is like that other young officer who was killed in France. Three days later his sister dreamed that she saw him sitting in a mess-room with his fellow-officers, evidently in the highest of spirits.

"Why, Dick," she said to him, "I thought you were dead."

"Dead," he replied, tossing back his head with a hearty laugh, "no, we are not dead, we are only waiting for new uniforms."

Now, no matter how much you may discount the reality back of the dream, the very fact that the sister had such a dream proves the instinctive outreaching of the subconscious mind or soul after the reunion with the beloved in another life. As one soldier boy wrote home about a comrade who had fallen under the blow of a German bullet: "It would take more than that to stop the chap we loved so."

Yes, so it would. Fear not them that are able to kill only the body, but rather fear Him who is able to destroy or to save both soul and body.

Josephine Dodge Daskam, in her poem,

“Motherhood,” shows how the bereaved mother demands another life for her boy:

*“The night throbs on; O let me pray, dear Lord!  
Crush off his name a moment from my mouth;  
To Thee my eyes would turn, but they go back,  
Back to my arm beside me where he lay,—  
So little, Lord, so little and so warm.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*“And I believe—Ah, God, my child shall go  
Orphaned among the angels! All alone;  
So little and alone! He knows not Thee,  
He only knows his mother—give him back.”*

Oh, yes, mother heart, you'll get him back some day; in that sweet bye and bye, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

*“When, with the morn those angel faces smile,  
That we have loved long since and lost awhile.”*

## IV

### THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

*“How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come?”*—I CORINTHIANS 15:35.

 N the apocryphal “Revelation of Peter” we are told that when Jesus and three of His disciples went up on the Mount of Transfiguration to pray they besought the Master to show them one of the righteous brethren who had departed from this world so that they might see what form the dead took in the future life. While they prayed (the account says) two of these departed saints stood before them, their bodies whiter than any snow and redder than any rose and their shoulders like a wreath woven of spikenard and bright flowers and their raiment so bright that they could not be looked upon. Accordingly, the curiosity of the disciples was not satisfied and the question of the text still remains unanswered to this day.

You are familiar, of course, with Paul’s argument in First Corinthians. There were certain errorists in the Corinthian church who denied both the fact and the manner of the resurrection of believers. Paul discusses, therefore, both of these points and our text comes just at the division between the two. In the first thirty-four verses he

attempts to prove the resurrection of Christ as a historic fact and in the last twenty-three verses he touches upon the manner of the resurrection. Accordingly, he begins his discussion of the mode of resurrection by saying: "But some man among you, there at Corinth, will not feel satisfied to know merely the vague fact of the resurrection. He will persist in asking: 'How are the dead raised and with what kind of body do they come into life eternal?'"

"Now," says Paul, "you're a fool, man, if you object to this doctrine on the assumption that the future body must necessarily be like the present body. The two are no more alike than a seed and a flower; a clod of earth and a star." Thereupon the apostle goes on, using the argument from the analogy of nature, which while it proves nothing, at least removes certain objections from the mind, so as to give the doctrine a clear right of way into the consideration of the Corinthian church.

Now, this doctrine of the resurrection of the body is not exclusively a doctrine of the Bible. It is found in different forms in some few of the ancient religions of the world. For example, in the religion of the Hindus there is the idea of a constant succession of cycles of history, one cycle being a reproduction or renewal of another. In the beginning the Supreme Being was one and alone. Then He said to Himself: "I will become many." Straightway creation takes place and all beings live. Then for a long period the generations flourish and finally sink. All forms of matter sink back

into the universal source whence they arose. Again the Supreme Being is one and alone. After an interval the same causes produce the same effects and all things recur exactly as they were before. You can see at a glance that while the idea of bodily restoration is here, it is far from being the Christian idea of resurrection.

Then, too, there was the Stoic idea of cycles of fire. God was supposed to be an artistic center from which fire issued, following a certain fixed course, according to the position of the stars; and after an established period, the train of fire returns to the Source and the period ends in a universal conflagration. Every event that has happened in one of these cycles is a reproduction of what has happened a thousand times before. Every event is therefore a resurrection of some dead event; but this again is far from our idea of the resurrection of the body.

We come closer home when we turn to the Old Testament and see the Jewish idea of the sacredness of the body. This comes out in the Levitical law which forbade the marking or cutting of the human form in token of grief for the dead. It was a common custom among the ancients to do this. In one instance in the Book of Kings the priests of Baal maimed themselves to please their god, but Jehovah told the people that His handiwork must not be disfigured, and the body, being God's gift, must therefore be kept without blemish or disfigurement. This is a preparation for Christianity's emphasis upon the sacredness

of the human body which was a new idea to the ancients.

The Greeks taught the care of the body, someone will remind me. Yes, they did, but what was the motive? The body was to be preserved for art's sake, for the perfection of the physical form, for prowess in war and for the delight of the senses. Christianity, on the other hand, says that the body is sacred because it is the temple which houses the eternal child of God. Christianity, therefore, throws an entirely new light upon the sacredness of the body and the idea of the resurrection fits into the Christian scheme as it does into no other scheme of religious thought.

### *I. The Gospel of the Resurrection Teaches That in the Future Life We Shall Have a Body*

When Col. Ingersoll's brother was dying he whispered: "I am better now," and commenting upon it at his funeral the great agnostic said: "Let us believe, in spite of doubts and dogmas, that these dear words are true of all the countless dead." Now, whatever Mr. Ingersoll's ideas may have been, there are many who insist that one element of the blessedness of the better life will be the absence of the body with all its weaknesses and pains.

Let me make it clear at the outset that this idea of the body being the cage of the soul, in which the captive spirit beats its wings against the bars in its effort to escape, is a heritage from the philosophic thought of the past—it is neither the Jewish nor

the Christian idea. Plotinus offered a famous thanksgiving for the fact that he was not tied to an immortal body. Plato is full of the same thought; that the body is a burden to be laid aside at last. The Manichæans held that matter is essentially evil and the Gnostics refused to recognize the reality of Christ's earthly body for the same reason. A mere material organism could not be the residence of a divinity.

Robert Browning's picture of Cleon, a Greek of the time of the crucifixion, is true to life. This Cleon was a friend of one of the provincial kings. He writes a kind of bread-and-butter letter to thank the king for the gifts which have just come in his galley. He is elated by the king's favor and yet he says when he thinks of himself, a few years hence, he dares to imagine some future state; and yet it cannot be, for Zeus would have revealed it had such a thing been true. Then Cleon refers to the letter which the king's messenger had given him addressed to Paulus. Cleon feels quite sure that the king, like himself, troubled about the future body, has turned to this Paulus (or Paul) for light; but the Greek feels that the king should be ashamed to turn to this heretic, for certain slaves had preached the same doctrine on his island—

*“And as I gathered from a bystander,  
Their doctrine could be held by no sane man.”*

One wonders if Cleon could have been part of the group which heard Paul preach on Mars' Hill. If so, he probably laughed, as well as the other cul-

tured Greeks, at these two strange deities Paul was supposed to be presenting: Jesus and Anastasis (or Resurrection).

It is clear, then, that the ancient world very largely rejected the idea of a bodily resurrection even when, in some instances, it admitted the immortality of the spirit. The two are quite distinct. One can believe that the soul lives on without believing in the resurrection of the body. Homer taught that the "eidolon" or "shade" continued to exist after death, although separated from the body it once inhabited. Yet, read on in Homer and you discover that this disembodied state is not a happy one. When Odysseus appears, the ghosts crowd about him and clamor for the draught of blood which will even momentarily reanimate their powers and give them back their conscious existence. This is Homer's way of telling us that man is a twofold being and that any intermediate state in which the body is sundered from the soul is an abnormal one and is certainty not a state of ideal blessedness.

The opening of King Tut's tomb brings afresh to our minds the custom of the ancients to put things in the tomb which would contribute to the comfort of the body on the other side. Crude as their ideas were, this custom shows the instinctive reaction of the human heart from an idea of endless life as a tramp and not a householder living somewhere. Heathen cults tried variously to keep a body for the departed soul. This explains the origin of Egyptian embalming.

The Bible lays down as fundamental one or two propositions which magnify the body. One is that the body in all its parts is the work of God. That comes out clearly in the Genesis story. God gave us bodies to start with. And a second proposition is that God wills that we should use aright these bodies, for they are the temples of the Creator. Now, of course, it might conceivably be true that bodies would be necessary in this stage of existence, but not in the life beyond. And yet the care God takes to make one human body gives us a hint at least that it may be needed forever. And the plain statements of Scripture make the hint a fact.

Henry Drummond, in his fascinating book, *The Ascent of Man*, has shown by a study of the brain and body that the human body as we have it today is the highest form of human life possible subject to the conditions of matter here, and that the structure completes the design of the animal kingdom. The only place this body can be improved on is the life beyond, and this seems to be what happens in the next stage of existence.

Let us summon witnesses to the debate, first those for the prosecution and then those for the defense.

Witness Number One takes the stand and he says: "I hold that the idea of resurrection is figurative and that it refers to the rising of the soul from death to life—it is a spiritual resurrection only." Oh, is that so? Well, my friend, if the word "resurrection" has any meaning at all, it means the raising again of what was dead, and as

the spirit does not die, how can it be raised from the dead?

We now call Witness Number Two. He is a Swedenborgian. He says: "I have a very convenient solution of this difficulty about bodies. I hold that man in this life has two bodies, an internal and an external, a material and a spiritual. The former dies and is deposited in the grave and remains there, never to rise again. The other does not die, but passes into another state of existence, in union with the soul. The only resurrection that ever takes place, therefore, occurs at the moment of death." Well, my friend, this cuts the Gordian knot physiologically, but whether it is Scriptural or not is quite another matter.

Let us call one or two witnesses for the defense. Joseph, have you anything to say on this question? Surely not in your day. "Only this: the reason I commanded the physicians to embalm the body of my father, Jacob, with such care was because of a primitive traditional belief of my people in a future rising from the dead of the body with which we die." Very well, who else? Here comes Mary Magdalene. "I want to testify that Jesus rose from the dead with a body, for I recognized Him on Easter morning." Yes, and here is Thomas: "I just want to say that I put my hands into the wounds and nail-prints. I am a lawyer. I could not have been deceived." Another? Yes, Paul. Oh, Paul, what have you to say? We know you wrote the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. "Oh," says Paul, "I wrote much beside that. I

wrote the eighth chapter of Romans, in which I said that the same Spirit which raised Christ from the dead would quicken your mortal bodies. Then, too, I wrote the third chapter of Philippians in which I said that our vile bodies would be likened unto Christ's glorious body. And then you surely know my fifth chapter of Second Corinthians, for I wrote my heart out there. I told you that I was never going to be turned out in the cold, but that when God allowed death to wreck my present house, He was going to furnish me with another one made in heaven." Last of all comes the dear Master Himself, the final and irrefutable proof of resurrection, and He says: "Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have."

So we accept the fact, although we may not thoroughly understand it. Tertullian used to say that God made the teeth indestructible in order to furnish material for the future body. Others think that there is somewhere in our present body an indestructible germ from which the body of the future is to be developed. It is certainly no more wonderful for God to make our future body than it has been for Him to make this one. Modern science says that the soul will build itself its own body, drawing to itself from the realms of space those particles of matter which suit its purpose. In any case, we shall have a body, and this thought comforted Tennyson as he longed for Arthur Hallam:

*"Eternal form shall still divide  
The eternal soul from all beside,*

*And I shall know him when we meet;  
And we shall sit at endless feasts,  
Enjoying each the other's good."*

## *II. The Gospel of the Resurrection Teaches That the Resurrection Body Will be a Developed Form of Our Present Body*

Did you ever think what you would bring in the market or at the second-hand store, if you had to sell yourself for junk? Take the materials of which your body is at present composed, and what would they bring? A German scientist has figured out that in the case of a man weighing 150 pounds, the fats are worth \$2.50. The iron would make a nail about one inch long. There is enough lime to whitewash a good-sized hen-coop; enough albumen to make one hundred hens' eggs and enough phosphorus for the heads of 2,200 matches. Add about a teaspoonful of sugar and a pinch of salt and you, a human body, are worth about \$7.50. Think of it! Your body is worth the price of a dining-car meal, for, say, five people—yet I dare to say to you that this pile of junk is immortal! No wonder the idea has been ridiculed. Let us look into it.

When we repeat the creed: "I believe in the resurrection of the body," men say, "the resurrection of what body?" We reply: "This body." Oh, then, you believe that the same body which is laid in the grave is to be resurrected? Yes, for how could the doctrine be intelligible otherwise? Paul's argument in First Corinthians shows that. "It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power,"—the same "it;" the same body. Do you remember

how careful Jesus was to demonstrate to the disciples that His resurrected body was the same body which had been nailed to the cross? "Well, then, do we understand you to say that precisely the same particles of matter are to be raised which are deposited in the grave?" Oh, no;—and that question brings up the larger question of identity; in what does it consist? To that we must turn our attention now.

Much ridicule has been heaped upon the doctrine of the resurrection of the body at this point. Suppose a body is cremated or lost at sea or returns to dust in the grave, naturally the question arises: how are the particles to be collected and made into a new body? The Persian myth was that the bones, blood, hair and vital force which had been entrusted to the keeping of earth, water, planets and fire respectively, are to be restored and each person rises in the place where his death had occurred. Augustine thought that the resurrected body would be composed of all the matter which had ever belonged to it in this world, and Jerome asked: "If men are not raised with flesh and bones, how can the damned gnash their teeth in hell?"

Certain considerations will help us out at this point. It is a wonderful fact that every particle in my body changes every seven years. This is a physiological fact—and yet the same old scars remain which were there many years ago. If you are fifty years old you say: "Well, I have had seven different bodies and yet I know this is the same body I had when I was born." How do you ex-

plain it? Simply this: Identity in living organisms does not consist in the sameness of material particles at all, but in the sameness of the vital, organizing principle. I have the same soul I had fifty years ago, if I am fifty years old, and that soul can shed bodies just like a man sheds suits of clothing, one after another; but just because the soul is supreme, as long as it remains the same (the soul being the animating principle of the body), any house which it builds for itself will be an exact replica of all the other houses it has lived in. You say that Cologne cathedral today is the same as it ever was, and yet, as a matter of fact, Von Rile drew such great plans for it that it cannot all be in repair at any one time; but just as in the case of the human body, part of it is all the time being repaired. It has consequently never been the same building ten years in succession, yet there is only one Cologne cathedral because the general plan and underlying purpose have never changed.

Take the formation of our present human body: who can explain it? Why it starts out just as a heart-throb, a tiny particle of matter inhabited by some mysterious energy which builds a body out of nothing. The wisest physician cannot explain how that little soul is smart enough to build that wonderful body. Well, now, if the soul can build itself a house in the body of a mother, why cannot the same soul build itself a body out of the invisible world? And when it does build itself a new body, though the particles may all be different, it will make its home enough like the old that it may

be said to be a raising again of the old body. The soul can attract to itself the old elements or make new ones, as it prefers.

Some of the new discoveries in physics wonderfully confirm Scriptural teaching about immortality and the resurrection. It may seem like a strange thing for a mechanical engineer to write on such a theme as "The Spiritual Suggestions of the New Discoveries in Physics," and yet such is the case. "Is Saul also among the prophets?" This writer holds that the researches of Ramsay and Collie have shown clearly that energy can be transformed into matter and matter back again into energy. Then he says: "Give me just one premise, and that is: the human soul is a form of energy." That seems like a reasonable definition. Then, if the soul is a form of energy, it is bound to be immortal because all the universe teaches the conservation of energy. It may change its form, but it can never disappear. Furthermore, if energy can be transformed into matter, the resurrection is scientifically possible; because the new body then is simply the conversion of soul-energy into its equivalent physical manifestation. We may or may not accept this reasoning; but it is a remarkable confirmation of a view of the resurrection held years ago, long before it was supported by science.

### *III. The Gospel of the Resurrection Teaches That the Resurrection Body Will be Different from the Present Body*

In a former chapter we spoke of a young officer

waiting for new uniforms, comparing the uniform to the body.

It is of these new uniforms we wish to speak in closing. Of what sort are they going to be? How much like the old will they look? Perhaps the best way to answer this question will be to go back to the resurrection experiences of our Lord. Here you find two sets of incidents, both of which must be considered. The one set of passages will show you how anxious Jesus was for the disciples to be convinced that this body of His was the same body which was nailed to the cross. He shows the wound and the nail-prints to Thomas. Here was the autograph of the cross on His body; it was the same body. Yet, on the other hand, you find another set of facts which would seem to indicate that it was a different body; at least it was the old body passed through a change which gave it new possibilities. He must have looked different somehow, for Mary Magdalene did not recognize Him until He spoke the second time on Easter morning. The men on Easter afternoon did not know their companion was Jesus. He could apparently pass through closed doors. He could make Himself visible or invisible at will.

Oh, it is all very wonderful. You may not accept my theory, but personally I believe there are latent, undeveloped possibilities in our bodies right now and that these are going to be worked out into their full fruition beyond the grave and that we shall have what Paul calls "a spiritual body." Now, what does he mean when he says: "It is

sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body?" Does he mean an im-material body? No, this would be a contradiction in terms. He means a body perfectly subject to the domination of the spirit—a body that will do whatever the spirit tells it to do.

The new body comes by development from the old just as the new body of the corn is a development from the old body. Take the grain and the sheaf of wheat. Let the sheaf speak: "Do you believe in the resurrection of the body?" "Yes." "Well, what is this present body you possess?" "Why, it is the form the old body takes in the new life. In the process of death a change takes place which, while it raises the old body, at the same time changes it." We believe in the resurrection of the old body into a new body. You can't pass through an experience like death and come out the same. The question as to just how different our resurrection body will be from our present body can be answered only by a study of the resurrection body of Christ, for we cannot possibly guess. Who would have guessed the wheat seed would become a sheaf? Who would have guessed the corn seed would become a great green stalk? Who would have guessed the acorn would become an oak? So it is that dying opens up to us the larger life, just as it did to Christ. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

What, then, is death—from this point of view? Why, death is not annihilation, it is only disorganization in order to reorganization. Hear, then, the

parable of the grub and the butterfly. An ugly, beetle-like grub crawls in the slime at the bottom of a pond. It revels in darkness and mud. It is perfectly satisfied with its home, but one day it feels an irresistible impulse to climb. It feels the pull of the heights even in its muddy domicile. It crawls slowly up a tender stalk and gradually, as it creeps up, it is overcome by a strange drowsiness until, on reaching the surface, it lapses into unconsciousness. Apparently it has died. No, it is passing through disorganization to organization. After a while it awakes. Every fibre of its being is throbbing with a new energy. It struggles out of the encasing shell, sloughs it off and leaves it to perish. Behold! It is no more an unsightly beetle, but a fairy-like creature with gossamer wings flashing their hues in the sunlight. It has left the environment of mud for the environment of stars. It has responded to the new surroundings. It has received from God a new body adapted to the new life. What has taken place? Why, the resurrection of the old body into a new body. Is not this a wonderful illustration to us of the mysterious change through which our bodies may go? If nature can do this much for a beetle; if God goes to all this trouble to give a new suit of clothes to a grub, why should He not go to still more trouble to furnish the right sort of heavenly body for His children? So I say no man can laugh at the doctrine of the resurrection till he first has laughed at the heredity of the butterfly. When he can explain that, I can explain this, but not before.

Thank God for the "new uniforms" ahead of us. Look at Robert Hall, the gifted writer whose genius was chained to a diseased spine. Look at Pascal, never for a moment free from pain. Look at Elizabeth Browning, weighing hardly seventy pounds, carried to table and to her bed. Look at Byron and Beethoven and Milton. Look at Heine who for years before his death was encased in a paralyzed body. When some one said to him, "You are better this morning, Monsieur," he said, "Better? Don't tell my poor wife. She has troubles enough to bear already." Look at Carlyle with a good heart, but with a liver so bad that nobody cared to live with him. Look at Paul with his thorn; he looked forward to the redemption of the body, not redemption from the body. "I do sigh within this tent of mine with heavy anxiety—not that I want to be stript, no—but to be under cover of the other, to have my mortal element absorbed by life." Paul wanted a new body, but a better one.

With this thought in mind, the minister says in the service of committal at the grave: "We leave the sacred dust here in the Father's keeping, looking for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ; at whose coming, in glorious majesty, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead, and the mortal bodies of those who sleep in Him shall be changed and made like unto His own glorious body; according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."

# V

## THE CASE AGAINST THE RESURRECTION

*“They covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.”*

—MATTHEW 26:15.

*“They gave large money unto the soldiers.”*

—MATTHEW 28:12.

 HIS looks like a very poor financial transaction. I wonder if you ever figured out how much it cost to get hold of Jesus and how much it cost to get rid of Him. Usually if a man buys a piece of property at a bargain, he holds it until he can dispose of it at a better price. Now, these chief priests probably thought they had made a very shrewd business deal with Judas Iscariot. He took the initiative and went to them with a proposition. He said: “You make me an offer; set your own figure; set a price on the head of Jesus. I will see if I can sell out to you for that.” And when they fixed the price of a common slave, it looked as though it was an insult to Jesus to rank Him so cheaply. Rather it was an insult to Judas, that he would sell his manhood and loyalty and character for so small a price. However, the bargain was made, the kiss was given and the property delivered on time.

But the body of Jesus proved to be a very troublesome piece of property. It was all well

enough as long as He was alive, but after His death, the question was raised as to how to get rid of Him. They put Him in a miracle-proof grave, as they supposed; they sealed it hermetically against all interference of God; yet somehow, between the sunset of Saturday—one Saturday of April, A. D. 29 or 30—and the sunrise of Sunday, the power of God worked its way into that tomb, unlocked the door from the inside and let the Victim out.

The question, of course, was to explain that absent body from the naturalistic point of view of the Pharisees. They could not admit that He was risen, for that would be a refutation of their entire position that He was just an ordinary man; so, with characteristic generosity, they blame it on the soldiers. Then they held a conference and raised a kind of campaign fund of "hush money." They said to the soldiers something like this: "Now, if you will take the blame for this thing and make the humiliating confession that a trained Roman guard slept on watch and that while you were all asleep this man's deluded followers came and stole His body away, we will give you a large salary for the lie and, furthermore, if Pilate learns about it, we will give another bribe to him. We will make it all right with the governor and you will not be molested." So the soldiers let it go that way. "They took the money and did as they were taught." It almost makes us smile to see these Roman soldiers learning their little piece and saying it with childish precision because their consciences had been

quieted with gold. The story closes by saying that this tale is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

There is a picture in the Royal Gallery of Brussels which represents Judas wandering about the night after the betrayal. He comes by chance upon the workmen who have been making the cross on which Christ shall be crucified tomorrow. A fire nearby throws its full light on the faces of the two workmen who are sleeping peacefully while resting from their labor. The face of Judas is in the shadow, but even so it is expressive of remorse and agony as he catches sight of the cross and tools. After a moment's gaze, however, he clutches his money tighter in his hand and hurries on into the night.

By putting our two texts together we get the market value of Jesus to the priests of His time. A jeweler told me once of a woman who came to his store and wanted him to buy back her wedding-ring. My friend reminded her what it had cost and asked what she would take for it. She named a price about half of its value and he bought it back at the reduced price. It does seem as if there was as little sentiment about Iscariot as there was about the woman. It looks as though, if Judas was willing to sell Christ at any price, it ought to have been a high one; but, of course, when the priests found he was willing to make a bargain-offer, they accepted it without debate.

The first of these texts reminds us of what it cost to get hold of Jesus. I tell you it cost the world

much more than that to get hold of Him. It cost the heart-pangs of His Father—God. “God so loved that he gave—” and Judas so loved that he sold; thus the difference between the two transactions that we know as Bethlehem and Calvary; as Christmas and Good Friday.

But I want especially today to turn your attention to the second text: what it cost to get rid of Jesus. Our theme concerns especially the efforts men have made through all the centuries to explain away the resurrection of Jesus. The priests hit upon the first theory which suggested itself to the mind, namely, that the disciples stole away the body while the guard slept. You observe on the face of it how improbable that was! In the first place, a trained Roman guard would not sleep while on duty. In the second place, if they were asleep, how could they know what happened? In the third place, supposing the disciples had concocted a plot to steal the body of Jesus, the coming of the party of thieves would have awakened a sleeping guard. In the fourth place, there comes the question: why should these disciples, who were not expecting the resurrection, try to steal the body? What would be their motive? What would they do with it when they secured it—for nobody has ever told us where they put it or what became of it, if this story be true. Then I ask a fifth question: why were not the disciples arrested if this were the case; for stealing, under such circumstances, was certainly a capital crime and it would have been a magnificent chance for the priests to have some of these hated

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Nazarenes put to death. Then, too, a sixth question: whoever came under these peculiar circumstances would have been in a great hurry to complete the task and get away safely. Yet the neatly-folded grave-clothes give the impression of an absolute lack of haste.

You see it is easy to riddle this theory. Lowell said we live in an age that blots out life with question marks. Well, we do live in a critical time—an age that continually asks: "Why?" and "How?" Today, therefore, we shall take up and consider briefly some of these critical theories that have been offered in the attempt to explain away the resurrection. We shall see whether they have invalidated the ancient fact or not.

### *I. There is the Fraud Theory of the Pharisees*

A few years ago there appeared a very powerful and thrilling novel entitled *When It Was Dark*. The author supposed the discovery of an ancient tablet in Judea proving that Christ did not rise from the grave, a fraud having been committed in relation to His burial; and showed how the whole civilized world was shaken by the consequent overthrow of the Christian religion. The argument was well put and the conclusion correct. These people who, like Professor Starbuck, tell us that Christianity has shown itself to be a saving power in the world irrespective of little incidents like the resurrection, are arguing in a circle. The reason Christianity has been the power it has in the world is that it is a faith built upon certain historic facts, and if you

pull these facts out from underneath it, the whole superstructure will fall. One of these cornerstone facts is that of the resurrection, and if Jesus was twice buried instead of once raised—buried once in Joseph's tomb and then buried somewhere else, nobody knows where—then He becomes simply a much-buried man, but you can never again read Paul's great words: "Declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead."

One of the recent lives of Christ which has come from Germany tells us that the resurrection can be explained by regret, by the change of mind of Joseph of Arimathea. This author holds that Joseph became sorry on reflection that he had put Jesus, a crucified man, in his fine new sepulchre. Thinking it over, he felt he had acted hastily, for that tomb had been designed and built for family use. Not knowing when it might be called into service, the thought of having it occupied by a condemned criminal was too much for him; so he went and took the body away. How he got hold of it, through this Roman guard, we are not told; but the German author says he got it, and he must know. "Such," says the book, "seems to be the simplest explanation of this secret transaction."

Now, is this a "simple explanation"? Look at the situation. Why should these plotting disciples, these villainous conspirators, want to take the body away? Joseph was a kind of half-way disciple and he had offered a tomb far beyond the means of the friends of Jesus to buy. If He had been buried in the Potter's Field they might want to claim His

body and put it in a better place, but when a rich man had offered the poor, bruised body a beautiful home, why should they want to take it away? In the first place, they could not get at the body; in the second place, what would they have done with it? In the third place, how could they go out to preach the Gospel of the resurrection, fight for it and die for it, when they knew it was founded upon a lie? Men die for many things, for God and home and native land, but they do not usually die for a lie. No, our friends from Judea and from Germany will have to patch up a better theory than this. Christianity is not founded on a graveyard theft! Civilization is not built on an ancient lie! Truth will out sooner or later, and a lie doesn't usually live to be two thousand years old!

## *II. There is the Swoon Theory of Paulus*

Heinrich Paulus inherited his doubts from his father. When his mother was dying, the elder Paulus, who had long doubted the story of the resurrection, asked his wife on her death-bed to appear to him in bodily form after her death. This she did, so that her husband saw (or thought he saw) her with the physical vision. The result was that he became such a strong advocate of Spiritualism that he was deposed from his office of deacon. Young Paulus inherited his father's doubts without his father's mysticism and established this philosophical principle: "Facts are measured by the conception of their possibility." It is impossible, for example, he said, that one should walk on the

Lake of Galilee, so the Gospel must mean that Jesus walked on the shore of the lake. It is impossible that one who is really dead should rise again. The meaning, therefore, is that Christ was only apparently dead when He lay in the sepulchre. Paulus thus became the originator of the swoon theory.

Let us look into this more closely. Jesus merely fainted on the cross—that is all. One day a man made Paulus very angry by telling him that Christ seemed to be nothing more than a mere man to him. He sprang from his seat with glowing cheeks and replied: “That is an unjust statement. Believe me, I never look up to the Holy One on the cross without sinking in deep devotion before Him.” Well, perhaps that was true; but as he looked at that Man on the cross who, according to his own confession, was an extraordinary phenomenon, elevated high above the whole human race and worthy to be adored, yet he looked not upon One who was dying for the world’s salvation, but upon a young Jew who had fainted from the pain of His wounds and the agony of thirst which accompanies crucifixion.

If this be true, the resurrection becomes the resuscitation instead. Jesus never died. He simply lost consciousness for part of three days and then revived. Coming to, He found Himself in a tomb and presumably somehow made His way out. Do you believe this theory?

Glance at some revisions we shall have to make in our Bibles and hymnals, if this theory be true:

“ God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son to suffer and faint on the cross! ”

“ *Alas and did my Saviour bleed,  
And did my Sovereign faint?* ”

“ I am he that liveth and was faint.” “ I am the resuscitation and the life.”

“ *The day of resuscitation,  
Earth, tell it out again.* ”

I will call Dr. Stroud to take the stand against Paulus for a moment.

“ Doctor, you are the author of a treatise *On the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ*. You are a physician? ”

“ Yes.”

“ What is your thesis? ”

“ I maintain, by numerous and conclusive arguments, that Jesus Christ came to His death not merely by crucifixion, but that all the symptoms show that there was a literal rupture of the walls of the heart. In the strictest physiological, as well as the deepest moral sense, Christ died of a broken heart. Ancient prophecy and medical science here agree.”

“ Very well, doctor. Is it a physical possibility that a man could have revived after a swoon lasting forty hours? ”

“ No, as a matter of fact in medical practice, if a person swoons, fifteen minutes of artificial respiration usually brings him back, and if the swoon lasts thirty minutes, the blood pressure is taken and

the patient is found to be dead. Such an idea as a swoon of forty hours is a physical absurdity—to say nothing of the sword-thrust and the stifling air of the tomb."

"Thank you, doctor, we will excuse you. We knew the theory was ridiculous, but we wanted your expert testimony to make assurance doubly sure. Have you any final word on the subject?"

"Simply this, that the recovery from such a swoon would be a greater miracle than the resurrection. Your professor is evidently inventing a terribly big miracle in an effort to discredit the Bible."

"Thank you, doctor, the case is dismissed."

### *III. There is the Myth Theory of Strauss*

The year 1835 was important in Tübingen, Germany. In that year a young man named David F. Strauss published his *Leben Jesu*. The mythical theory which had made havoc of Greek and Roman history and of the Old Testament narratives was in that year applied to the Gospels by Strauss, with the result that all the miracles were turned into myths; all that remained was the Christ-idea. This rule was laid down as a starting-point: "Nothing which is supernatural can be historical." The Gospel narrative, in all of its supernatural features, is therefore simply a poetic fiction.

Here is the way Strauss worked out his theory. The myth always starts from an idea and invents facts to embody and represent it. Every nation

in its childhood passes through the myth period, and the Jews were no exception. There was a fixed idea in the Jewish mind that the Messiah would perform certain miracles, such as healing the sick and raising the dead. There was also a fixed idea in the minds of the disciples that Jesus was the Messiah and consequently the myth-making faculty instinctively invented the miracles supposed to belong to the Messiah and ascribed them to Jesus. One of these miracles was that of His own resurrection. The Egyptians, who were next-door neighbors to the Jews, believed in bodily resurrection. They had a god, Osiris, who was said to have risen from the dead. So the disciples, partly filled with Old Testament prophecies and partly spurred on by their neighbors, invented the myth, the fairy story if you will, of the resurrection of Jesus. They started from an idea and then, like well-trained novelists, they made up a story to carry out the idea. That is all.

Well, Strauss is dead long ago; not merely the man, but his theory also. As far as I know there are very few today who pay serious attention to his contention, yet every now and then somebody feels he must reopen the old controversy. I wonder if you remember the excitement of 1911, when Professor Drews, of Karlsruhe, startled the peaceful world with his book, *The Christ Myth?* This treatise was to the effect that Jesus of Nazareth never existed (going further than Strauss), that the Christian Church was a Gnostic sect and that Jesus was a deity worshipped in the Christian Era.

This reminds us of a professor in Tulane University who, by hard work, had picked up four little passages (one from the Book of Acts and three elsewhere) which justified him in believing that Jesus was a myth. Four little fragments, mind you, for which he threw away all the testimony of the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, to say nothing of all the other evidence. If Christians had to work as hard to defend the resurrection of Jesus as their opponents do to disprove it, they would make themselves ridiculous in the eyes of the world.

I am glad I live in the twentieth century for the reason that a reaction to sanity has come along the line of historical criticism. "A large part of the work of the twentieth century will be to take out of the waste-basket what the nineteenth century, with inconsiderate precipitation, threw away." Some of the Christians of the last century, says Dr. Wood, remind him of the frightened householder who, hearing a burglar in the entrance hall, rushed to the top of the stairs and flung down the silver-basket with its valuable contents, crying in a trembling voice: "There it is. It is all I have. Take it and go." Too many surrendered all they had before they were called upon to stand and deliver.

Are we going to surrender Jesus so easily? If so, we are worse than the chief priests; for they paid a large amount of money to get rid of Him, but we give Him up without money and without price. No, we shall not give Him up without a

struggle. He means too much to us. We are going to insist upon the scientific principle that every effect demands an adequate cause. It is an easy thing to say offhand that there never was a Napoleon Bonaparte, but how are we going to explain the French Revolution? It is easy to say that there never was a George Washington, but how are we going to explain the United States of America? It is easy to insist that there never was a Kaiser Wilhelm II., but how will we account for the world war? It is easy enough to deny a historic Christ, or to say that if there was such a Person, He certainly never rose from the dead, but how explain Christianity? How will you take a band of disappointed disciples who had gone back to their old lives with broken hearts on Friday night and Saturday, and turn them into enthusiastic propagandists the next week, unless you admit the possibility of something happening on Sunday morning?

The trouble is, when you consider the impression Jesus has made on the world, if you make Him an ordinary man, the impression is altogether out of proportion to the Personality. The two must agree. If it is all a myth; if Christmas never happened; if the multitude was never fed; if all the miracles reported of Jesus are but incidents of a novel; if the cross was only imaginary and the open grave a dream,—then I think we had all better go to the insane asylum for writing the name of Jesus on our letter-heads and putting His cross on our churches. If, on the other hand, it is all terribly true, if there is no salvation in any other name

than His, then I think we should all fall into lock-step with that Roman centurion as he staggered away from the tragedy of Calvary with averted face, and cried out his confession of faith between trembling lips: "Truly this man was the Son of God."

#### *IV. There is the Hallucination Theory of Renan*

Were the disciples crazy? The Frenchman thinks so. If you cannot explain the resurrection by thievery or by a fainting fit or by wholesale invention, surely you can explain it by insanity. Christendom is founded upon delusion. The trouble with the disciples was their overheated imaginations. They saw things. They lived in a haunted world.

Let us get this theory clearly in mind. It is merely a matter of abnormal psychology. The darkness is peopled with presences when the heart is sad. Often a parent will be visited by the apparition of a child he has lost. One of the founders of a great university, after the death of an only son, had a visitation from him and revelation of the use to which the father's millions should be put. The image was distinct enough to be transferred from mind to mind and placed on an artist's canvas. Go into a psychological laboratory and sit before a white or gray screen with eyes steadily fixed on the same spot. Hold before the mind an image of some such figure as a circle or a Greek cross and most persons will find that after a few honest trials, the image will actually appear on the

screen. By a little training it can be made to assume different forms and even different colors. How wonderfully simple it all is! We should not have thought the disciples so easy, but that is all it was; they were highly imaginative and very enthusiastic and easily carried away by their enthusiasms. No, they did not invent a myth, but a legend; for the legend starts from facts and alters them to fit a certain idea. Hence the disciples started from the fact or character of Jesus and invented incidents like the resurrection to exalt and magnify Him in the eyes of the future world.

There is only one thing wrong with this beautiful theory given us by Renan. What is it? Why, he has worked the disciples up to play a part which, poor fellows, they cannot act out to save their lives. It just was not in them. The one presupposition upon which the idea of hallucination is built is that of expectancy. The whole theory falls unless it can be shown that the men were expecting Jesus to rise from the dead and were looking for Him on every street-corner of Jerusalem. Whereas, if the Gospels make anything plain, it is that the resurrection is the one thing they were not expecting. The Master had to labor to convince them that He had actually risen. Consequently, this theory falls of its own weight. No, hysteria will not explain Easter Sunday. History is not Hysteria but His-story.

#### *V. The Materialistic Theory of Scientific Thought*

A fox, so the story goes, once came to a cave

into which he saw many foxes had entered, the sand being full of footprints. He was about to pass in also when his cunning eye detected that all the footprints pointed one way—all turned in, but none coming out of the cave. Such is the cave of death. The scientist, like the cautious fox, stands hesitantly at the grave and remarks that all the footprints point one way. Hence he makes up his mind that nobody ever came out, whereas if he would look just a little closer, he would see one lone pair of footprints leading out of the grave, and they are marked by a scar.

*“Hath He marks to lead me to Him  
If He be my Guide?  
In His feet and hands are nail-prints  
And His side.”*

Science is taking off its hat more reverently at the grave of Jesus today than ever before. In fact, many scientists could be named who defend the doctrine of the resurrection as stoutly as some of their predecessors once opposed it. A doctor of philosophy some time ago stated that even the naturalistic attitude does not dispose of an event so unusual as the resurrection of Christ. Maybe it is just as normal for the body of a sinless man to rise from the grave as it is for the body of a sinful man to remain there. How do we know? There is such a network of laws that the truly scientific man is very slow to dogmatize about what can and what cannot happen. For example, as a general rule, all things expand by the application of heat, but rubber has a way of its own, and goes

on doing as it pleases. It must be following some other law we know nothing about. As a rule, the greater the heat the greater the expansion; but you take water between thirty-two and thirty-six degrees and it swerves from this rule and obeys another law, and all your formulas cannot change it.

Now, I submit the question: has not Jesus of Nazareth, a unique Personality, just as much right to swerve from the law of decay and death at the age of thirty-three as rubber and water have to swerve from the usual laws of heat at a given temperature? Is Jesus going to be a lesser power than water and rubber? Do you not see that there are more laws in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy, O ye philosophers and scientists?

Let us approach the subject from the angle of an experiment described in Le Bon's *Evolution of Forces*. An experiment was made in a hydro-electric factory which showed that a column of water about one inch thick, falling through a tube about a quarter of a mile high, could not be broken by the violent blow of a saber. The arm is stopped as if by a wall when it arrives at the surface of the liquid. A professor who witnessed the experiment is persuaded that if the velocity of the column of water were sufficient, a cannon-ball would not go through it. Now, if you give that column of water the form of a vortex ring, you will get an idea of the way particles move to form solid matter and an explanation of its rigidity.

The point is this: that the immaterial ether,

when transformed into small vortex-rings, driven by sufficient velocity, may become very material. In other words, matter is dependent for its very existence on some power which drives these etherial particles at a very rapid rate and when that driving power is withdrawn and the whirling movement stopped, matter instantly vanishes and returns to its native ether. That is the modern theory of the nature of matter. Everything we see, touch, taste, is just a whirling mass of particles and the rapidity of the whirling determines the quality of the substance. Now, who or what is the power which keeps the particles moving and keeps matter in existence? I turn for answer to Paul's first chapter of Colossians. Here I find that when he is discussing the seven superiorities of Christ he says that He "is the image of the invisible God . . . that by him all things (both visible and invisible) were created and by him all things consist (or hold together)." That sounds like an inspired description of a scientific fact, does it not? Christ is the power that holds matter in existence. He holds the particles in place. By Him all things consist, or cohere.

Does this throw any light on the possibility of the resurrection? It seems to me that it does. If Christ is the Master of matter as well as spirit, can He not change the speed of the whirling particles at any time? If the soul is a form of energy, then it is immortal; and if the researches of modern chemistry have proven the possibility of energy transferring itself into matter, then we can understand

that the soul of Jesus (being immortal) could reanimate the body crucified on the cross and could raise it from the bier on which it had been laid in Joseph's tomb. Now, suppose this living Christ faces the stone door of the sepulchre shutting Him in. If the particles of that stone are held together by His will can He not change their motion and dissolve them into ether and pass through the doorway into the outer air?

As for the Roman guard, a telepathic message from His soul to theirs could make them sleep. He can wrap around Himself a body as He wills and again, by changing the rate of vibration of the particles of matter in His own blessed body, He can make it visible or invisible at will. He can pass through closed doors. He can travel through space at an incredible speed. In short, He can do what the world calls "miraculous" because He is Master of nature. He can walk upon the water or calm the sea or raise the dead, because matter is just the manifestation of spirit and is perfectly subject to His will. So here we are, defending the resurrection, with the very arguments, the identical theories and hypotheses of those who were once its enemies.

As far as I know, these are the leading theories which have been suggested to disprove the event. What do you think of them? I will tell you what I think. I think if that is the best the attorney for the prosecution can do, he has a pretty weak case. Wait until you hear the attorney for the defense and decide for yourself. It is rather late in the day to try to disprove the resurrection of Jesus, an

event on which the Christian civilization of the last 1900 years has been built. It is rather late to pull the foundation out from under a building which has grown gray with age. Personally, I believe the foundation will hold through all storms. Christianity is like the house that was built upon a rock. The rains descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon it, but it fell not because it stood squarely upon the Rock of Ages.

Julian the Apostate found it so. He tried to knock the building down. He undertook certain experiments to prove that the Scriptures could not be true. He removed the cross from the military standards of Rome and substituted pagan emblems. He put all the heathen temples in repair and made paganism once more the religion of the state, but at last he met his Master. On one of his campaigns against the Persians, on June 26, 363 A. D., while fighting in the midst of the battle without armor, he fell, mortally wounded by a spear. Where the spear came from, whether Persian or Roman, pagan or Christian, nobody knows. Tradition says that in his last hours of agony he cried aloud: "O Galilean, Thou hast conquered."

*"In vain with stone the cave they barred;  
In vain the watch kept ward and guard;  
Majestic from the spoileèd tomb,  
In pomp of triumph Christ is come."*

*"And all He did and all He bare  
He gives us as our own to share;  
And hope and joy and peace begin—  
For Christ has won and man shall win."*

## VI

### THE CASE FOR THE RESURRECTION

*“Jesus saith unto her, Mary.” . . . “Then saith he unto Thomas, Reach hither thy finger.”—JOHN 20:16, 27.*

**M**ARY and Thomas divide the world. They represent two classes of thinkers. Somebody has said that they typify two kinds of believers, the feminine and the masculine. Whether that be true or not, the fact is certain that they marched by different routes to the tomb of Jesus. All avenues of investigation focus or center at the grave of Joseph of Arimathea. Jesus of Nazareth stands at the center of the circle, waiting to meet all comers. If the resurrection had not been a fact; if Christ had not been able to stand the searching test of the centuries, He might have fled the place and left an aching void to answer the anxious questionings of men. There might have been a great zero at the heart of the world instead of a tremendous Fact; but as it is, we find in Him the everlasting “Yes” to the querries of history. As the Scripture says: “In him was yea.”

Mary and Thomas represent intuition and reason respectively. Jesus meets them both. Here was this weeping woman, wondering where the gardener had taken her Lord. She was in no state of mind

to be argued with. She did not want a lecture on apologetics. Her woman's heart was hungry, but it needed only one word to satisfy it. "Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She saith unto him, Rabboni!" and the thing was done. Convinced? Of course she was. Why, she would have waded through seas of fire in defense of the resurrection. One word chased her tears away: "Mary." With Thomas it was different. He was controlled by his head, not his heart. He went poking that inquisitive forefinger of his around the universe hunting for evidence. No sentiment about him, no, sir. He was cold as steel. Either Jesus had risen or He had not. The pre-supposition was against it. Men usually stay dead. If Jesus was an exception, let Him prove it. Then Jesus meets him also. "Thomas, reach hither thy finger and be not faithless but faithful." Now it was Thomas' turn to cry, and he did. "The case is dismissed," he said. "My Lord and my God!"

I have chosen this combined text because it shows that Jesus did not expect people to accept the resurrection without a struggle. It was good of Him to give us some evidence. He might have asked us to take it all on faith, but He did not. He condescended to meet us on the plane where we live. He appealed to all three of the possible senses: sight, hearing and touch. He knew (in the words of Professor Thornwell) that "evidence alone should be the measure of assent." The Master would have had very little sympathy with that modern movement which distinguishes between the

Easter message and the Easter faith. The Easter message is the story of the empty grave and the various appearances, and that is of little worth, we are told, and can be given up; but the Easter faith that Jesus still lives with God is the vital matter and must be kept. In other words: keep the doctrine of the resurrection but deny the fact on which it rests. Jesus was too logical and fair for such a position as this. He wanted to establish first the fact and then build the doctrine and faith upon it. Let us look at some of the evidence which can be offered. Professor Jevons tells us that "no evidence gets beyond the region of the probable. Only abstract reasoning is theoretically certain." Maybe so. To say the least, then, it is extremely probable that Jesus of Nazareth rose from the dead.

### *I Offer First the Evidence of the Open Sepulchre*

This was the first thing which impressed Mary Magdalene. When she came to the tomb early in the morning she saw the stone rolled away from the door. That was the first sight, but this of itself does not prove that Jesus had risen. It did not prove it even to Mary. She ran and said to Simon Peter: "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb and we know not where they have laid him." The open tomb merely showed that somebody had tampered with the seal. That was, at least, very strange when the tomb had been sealed and guarded by a Roman deputation who had just one task, and that was to keep it closed.

Now, who could have opened the tomb, leaving aside the Scriptural explanation? Surely not the Romans, for their own soldiers were guarding it. Certainly not the Jews, for they requested the guard. Of course it could not have been the Christians, for they lacked a police force capable of overcoming the guard. Well, then, who did? It seems to me we are shut up to the Bible's explanation for sheer inability to find any other. The Bible says "angels." Then you bring in the supernatural? Yes, but I do not expect you to accept this story, my friend, if you have the kind of world-view which eliminates God from the universe and shuts Him up in heaven or somewhere else. Here is the real debate on the question of miracle. It is not a case of lack of evidence, but a conflict of different world-views. If you think God's supreme task, as Borden P. Bowne used to say, is to keep  $\frac{1}{2}m. v.$ <sup>2</sup> a constant quantity at all hazards, then there is no question of a resurrection. If, on the other hand, you believe that our race is in the hands of God and that He is gently moulding the lives of men and women according to His will, then you will at least leave some chinks in your solid-universe idea where angels can creep in and be at home.

## *II. I Offer the Evidence of the Empty Tomb*

Peter was the discoverer of the empty sepulchre. Mary ran and told Peter and John that the tomb was open and they started on a run for the place. John, being younger and fleeter, got there first, but

waited outside until Peter came and entered in. Now, suppose you and I take our stand beside Peter as he looks around. The question is: who emptied this grave? Some years ago Congress issued a special edition of Thomas Jefferson's Bible. You remember that he closed it with the burial of Jesus. "They rolled a great stone to the door of the grave and departed." The difference between Thomas Jefferson's religion and ours is this: he believed in a full tomb and an empty Christianity; we believe in an empty tomb and a full Christianity. Well, Brother Jefferson to the contrary notwithstanding, the tomb was empty.

I think we will all agree on this: either that tomb was emptied by supernatural hands or by human hands. Very well, suppose we exclude the supernatural: then the tomb was emptied either by the gardener or by the friends or by the foes of Jesus. Suppose it was the gardener: that is one theory. Maybe Mary was right in her guess. If you ask why he should do this, the answer is: in order to prevent the trampling of the garden by the disciples of Jesus, for he rightly anticipated that the spot would become a shrine frequented by our Lord's followers. So the sign, "Keep off the grass," explains the resurrection, does it? How simple! Four words solve the riddle to which whole libraries have been devoted. But wait a moment. How could the gardener get at the body through that Roman guard? Oh, that is so. That does present a slight difficulty. We had not thought of that. And if he did take the body

away, why did he not produce it and end the controversy about the resurrection?

Perhaps, then, it was the friends of Jesus who stole His body. Maybe it was Joseph of Arimathea himself. George Moore has founded the "Brook Kerith" on a tradition. The old legend is that Jesus was an Essene Monk. The Essenes were a body of Jewish mystics who, not believing in the Jewish ritual and sacrifice, dwelt apart in the desolate tracts of the Dead Sea. Now, Joseph of Arimathea was one of the brethren of this recluse order. He had been a pensive youth who, after trying all the philosophies of the day, found satisfaction in none of them until he met Jesus of Nazareth. Coming under the spell of that unique Personality, he would gladly have left all and followed Him, but dreaded to sacrifice his father, so he chose home instead of Jesus. After the crucifixion, however, he begs the body from Pilate, nurses the tortured body back to life and restores Jesus to the Essenes, there to carry on the work of a shepherd. Apparently, Joseph himself is killed by zealots from Jerusalem, but Jesus lives on. So runs the story.

But here comes the question again: how could Joseph get hold of the body? Pilate would not have dared to let the body be taken down from the cross until assured that Jesus was dead—stone dead; and the Roman police would not let Joseph have Him until three days were up; so if Joseph, the owner of the tomb, cannot get the body, surely none of the disciples could have secured it.

Go another step, then. Perhaps the enemies of Jesus removed the body. But why would they do the very thing which would spread the report of a resurrection? Within seven weeks Peter openly preached the resurrection in the very city where this took place, so if the authorities had the body, all they had to do was to produce it and thus disprove Peter's statements. Yet they did not do this. Why not? As has been well said: "The silence of the Jews is just as significant as the speech of the Christians."

### III. I Offer the Evidence of the Discarded Clothes

Greek is a wonderfully rich language. If we read the resurrection chapter of John's Gospel in Greek we shall discover that there are three different Greek verbs used to express three different kinds of seeing which were indulged in at the Garden Sepulchre. Mary's seeing was one kind, Peter's was another and John's was still another. Mary "saw" that the stone was rolled away, but she did not see far enough at first. She jumped at conclusions. The word used is "*Blepo*," which indicates the superficial glance; the look which does not get beyond surface appearances and hence comes to wrong conclusions.

When the account turns to Peter, a different verb is used, the word "*theoreo*," from which we get our word "theorize." Peter saw the linen clothes lying there and the napkin neatly folded in a place by itself. This does not look like the work of robbers. Not at all. Robbers never leave

things behind. These superior linen goods would have been of more value to them than the lifeless body of Jesus. Peter sees that robbery is therefore excluded as a motive. His vision is half-way between Mary's and John's. Mary goes off at a tangent with a wrong explanation, but Peter is puzzled and departs "wondering in himself at that which was come to pass."

Now we come to John. He takes in the whole situation. "He saw (*eidon*) and believed." He observed that there had been no unseemly haste, but evidently quiet deliberation. He saw that the tomb looked as though a Conqueror had risen from His resting-place and, quietly laying aside the garments of the night, had gone forth in garments of the day, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race. John saw and believed. He was the first person in the whole world to believe that the resurrection of Jesus from the dead was a glorious fact, and the argument which convinced him was not so much the empty tomb as the discarded grave-clothes.

I wonder if any of you remember a sacramental sermon on "The Old Clothes at the Cross." If you do, you will recall how Jesus' daytime garments were stolen by the soldiers. In this case He gives His night-time garments away to the tomb. He needs them no more. Where did He get the clothes which He wore as He emerged from the tomb? I do not know, but I do know that the same Power which could call Him from the dead could clothe Him with light as with a garment as He proceeded on His resurrection way; and as we

stand by that open tomb we can reverently put upon the lips of Jesus the words of the poet:

*"I go to prove my soul.  
I see my way as birds their trackless way.  
I shall arrive! What time, what circuit first  
I ask not, but unless God sends His hail  
Or blinding fire-balls; sleet or stifling snow,  
In good time—His good time—I shall arrive.  
He guides me and the birds; in His good time,  
For where I listen, music, and where I tend,  
Bliss forever."*

#### *IV. I Offer the Evidence of the Various Appearances of Christ*

Men have sometimes been hung on circumstantial evidence. There was no positive proof that they had committed a certain crime, but all indications pointed in that direction. Often the truth has been discovered too late. Now, notice that up to this point all the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus has been purely circumstantial. (a) The grave was open; (b) it was empty; (c) it was arranged in an orderly manner. Do these things prove absolutely that Christ came to life? Not at all, and if that were all the evidence we possess, any lawyer would tell us that our faith rests upon very precarious grounds; but blessed be God, we have stronger proof than any of these. We have the actual appearances of the risen Christ. Fourteen separate times, apparently, did He appear either to individuals or to groups of the disciples. David Frederick Strauss, the great German infidel, said that the resurrection was the center of the

center, the real heart of Christianity; and Jesus spares no pains to build a solid foundation for the faith of His future Church in this doctrine.

May I refer once again to George Moore's book, *The Brook Kerith*? In this he describes an imaginary meeting between Jesus and Paul at the Essene Monastery in which the Apostle angrily refuses to believe that the Jesus he meets is the Jesus whose resurrection from the dead he is preparing to preach throughout the Gentile world. The author describes Jesus as appearing with a "thin, scrannel (scrawny?) throat" and prominent nose and chin. He is a self-deluded fanatic who seemed to hate everybody he looked upon. He sees in His sufferings the just punishment of one who had the rashness to proclaim Himself a God and He gives up the pursuit of the crown. The book ends with a vague suggestion that Jesus goes to India to join a body of monks whose doctrines are similar to His own.

I have dwelt upon this book to show you how different are the Gospel descriptions of the appearances of Jesus, and how high they rise above the commonplace melodrama of such a book as this. The fact is that although there are variations in the narratives, they all bear witness to two facts: the empty grave and the risen Lord. These Gospels of ours are not histories in our sense of the term, but memorabilia or personal reminiscences; and the risen Saviour is the central figure of these Easter memories. Paul, in one chapter, appeals to more than 250 living witnesses of the resurrection

of Jesus and this was certainly not a safe thing to do unless he was sure of his ground.

Perhaps it will help you appreciate the evidence if you remind yourself of the fact that there is nothing in the event, from one point of view, to which testimony is not borne and accepted every day in the week. Break it up into two parts and you will see what I mean.

1st.—There was the evidence that a man died and was buried. We have that evidence daily and there is no dispute about it.

2nd.—There was evidence that a certain man was alive. There again we accept this evidence daily.

We do not, however, have evidence daily that the same man was first dead and afterward alive. That is the extraordinary feature here. It is interesting, however, to notice that by separating the facts thus, it may be seen that the evidence of Jesus' resurrection is the sort of evidence which is accepted daily as reliable and beyond dispute. If any fact of history can be believed on the strength of good and sufficient evidence, the resurrection of Jesus can be so believed.

One of these appearances of the great forty days has been aptly described by Ezra Pound in *The Ballad of the Goodly Fere*.

*"Have we lost the goodliest fere of all  
For the priests and the gallows tree?  
Aye, lover He was of brawny men,  
Of ships and the open sea.*

*"When they came with a host to take Our Man  
His smile was good to see;  
'First let these go,' quoth our Goodly Fere,  
'Or I'll see ye damned,' says he.*

*"A Son of God was the Goodly Fere  
That bade us His brothers be,  
I have seen Him cow a thousand men,  
I have seen Him upon the tree.*

*"A master of men was the Goodly Fere,  
A mate of the wind and sea;  
If they think they have slain our Goodly Fere,  
They are fools eternally.  
I have seen Him eat of the honeycomb  
Since they nailed Him to the tree."*

V. *I Offer, as the Final Evidence, the Threefold Argument: The Lord's Book, The Lord's Day, The Lord's Body* ✓

Here is a triumvirate of witnesses. They refuse to be separated. They sing in chorus one and the same anthem, and the words are these: "Christ the Lord is risen." If you want to see these together and get a picture of the family group, as it were, go into some assembly of Christians on any Sunday morning and what do you find? A group of people gathered together on the first day of the week. If you ask them: "Why are you here today?" they will answer: "This is the Lord's Day." "Then what are you doing here?" "We are listening to the reading and exposition of some great text out of the New Testament." "The New Testament—what is that?" "Oh, that is the Lord's Book." "Well, what organization do you represent? Who are you that have come together?"

Are you a club or society or synagogue? What are you?" "Why, we are the Christian Church, the Lord's body." So here you have the triumvirate, a unified and magnificent argument for the resurrection: the Lord's Body met together on the Lord's Day to hear the teaching of the Lord's Book. Let us separate these three brethren for a moment and look at each a little more closely.

(a) *Summon the Lord's Day.* Here we open a big question. How did the Sabbath come to be changed from the seventh to the first day of the week? When Jesus came, the Old Testament Sabbath had become so overburdened with the details set down by the rabbis that it took two whole volumes of the Talmud to contain the specifications. The burdensomeness of these furnished Jesus the occasion for a new departure. The custom grew of meeting in the synagogue on the Sabbath (Saturday) for the expounding of the law by Himself and His disciples. Thus there were originally services of worship on Saturday in the Christian Church as the Book of Acts plainly shows. The Book of Acts also shows, however, that the first Synod of the Church (which was composed entirely of Jews and which met to consider the question as to whether Gentile converts should be required to keep the law of Moses) in rendering its decision, omitted Sabbath-keeping from its specifications. Why should it have done so unless it were for the reason that these Jews, these Saturday-Christians, deemed Sunday or the Lord's Day as the Gentile equivalent of their Old Testament Sabbath?

It is interesting to notice that the "Didache," or "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles"—which was discovered in 1875 in a monastery and which is regarded by all scholars as the oldest Church manual in existence—answers for the first time many historical questions concerning the doctrine and polity of the earliest Christian Church. Scholars agree that this was written before 100 A. D. Chapter fourteen of the book deals with "The Lord's Day and the Sacrifice." It is noticeable that there is no command in this document to keep the Sabbath (Saturday) and that already, at the end of the first century, Sunday is the sacred day of worship.

"On the Day of the Lord come together and break bread and give thanks." This is a pretty hard argument for our Seventh Day Adventist friends to answer.

I am willing to admit that for the first two centuries the observance of two Sabbaths continued. Some of the early Christians, after the example of Jesus, met on Saturday for special edification and on Sunday in memory of Christ's resurrection. The two days were observed for entirely different reasons. Our Sabbath in almost every respect is in contrast to the Old Testament Sabbath. Naturally, however, as Christianity grew, the observance of two days tended to be combined into one and after the third century of the Christian Era, the Jewish Sabbath fell into disuse and the first day of the week became established by law as the Christian Sabbath. When you go to the calendar, therefore, and interrogate Sunday as to its

right to make you close up your store and repair to the place of worship, it would say, if it could speak: "The resurrection of Jesus alone explains me. I was the fortunate day on which He rose. Hence my Old Testament brother has decreased and I have increased."

(b) *What about the Lord's Book, the New Testament?* It is too late in the day for forgeries to live very long. If there ever was a time when people swallowed things whole it has long since gone by. There are too many detectives abroad. As you know, the New Testament has been subjected to the most searching historical criticism. Every word and sentence has been passed under the microscope. If any book were a forgery it would long ago have been held up to the ridicule of the world. Now the question is: Does the New Testament, in its present form, have anything to do with the resurrection of Christ? Thomas Jefferson's Bible answers that question: you can have a syncopated New Testament without it, but you cannot have the present edition.

If Jesus never rose from the dead, of course He never appeared to Saul on the way to Damascus; and if He never appeared to Saul, this man was never converted; and if he was never converted, he never wrote those wonderful epistles which comprise so much of our New Testament. Then, too, if Jesus never rose, all four of the Gospels are false, for they all tell the story of the resurrection; and if they tell one thing which is untrue, how can we believe anything they say? Perhaps they are

all a fabrication of lies. Then, of course, the Book of Revelation goes, for Jesus never appeared to John in Patmos, and so these broken, disappointed men whose Chief was killed, are left to us as deluded failures; men who left their nets to follow a leader who led them only to despair. No, this magnificent confidence in their Master, which breathes through every page of the New Testament, was never born in the school of a broken heart. The thing is psychologically impossible. I throw out the challenge today: Who can explain the New Testament as being written over the grave of a dead Galilean?

(c) *Then there is the Lord's Body, or the Christian Church.* Every fact of life requires an explanation. The cause must always be in proportion to the effect. You, I, this church, this city—all are effects for which there must be adequate causes. Now, the Church of Jesus Christ in the world today is a tremendous fact. Nobody can dispute that assertion. What is the explanation of this fact? The cause of this effect? Well, you may have your explanation and I mine, but I will give you the answer of the Book of Acts; if you can get a better one, take it!

The Book of Acts makes two simple and incontrovertible statements: (1) The Christian society (or Church) was gathered together by preaching; (2) The substance of this preaching was the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now, if the Book of Acts is a trustworthy record—and Dr. Ramsay, after deep historical re-

search, has shown it to be—how are you going to get away from this testimony? How are you going to explain the fact that the first Christians were Jews? When Jesus Christ was put to death on the cross He would, according to their law, have been rejected as accursed had another great fact not been true. If Jesus had been left to lie in the grave, they would have said: "Serves him right. He should have been stoned to death for blasphemy, and that is what we Jews would have done to him; but as long as Rome insisted on killing him by her method of crucifixion, it is all right with us. The main thing is that he be dead."

Instead of this, God raised Him up and put the seal of approval on His Son. Nothing short of this could have led to the Jewish acceptance of Christ as the Messiah. Somebody has well put it thus: "The Church is too holy for a foundation of rotteness and it is certainly too real for a foundation of mist."

As we close our arguments and leave the air of the court-room for that of the cloister and the heart, may I remind you that you and I, as part of this Church, this Body of Christ, may make our lives an argument for Him and the truth of His risen life?

*"What think ye of Christ, Friend, when all is done  
and said?*

*Like ye this Christianity or not?*

*It may be false, but will ye wish it true?*

*Has it your vote to be so if it can?"*

## VII

### WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

*“For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.”*

—PHILIPPIANS 1:23.

 STRAIT is a narrow body of water between two large bodies of land. Paul says in the text that he is in a strait betwixt two things. On one side of him is the land we call this life, human existence. On the other side of the strait is the future, what we commonly call heaven. Paul knows he can't live on both sides the river at once; duty calls him back to earth, but desire calls him on to God. “I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ.”

The question which concerns us today is: What kind of land is this place beyond the river? Can we get a searchlight strong enough to throw its beams into the dark recesses of that country and light it up for us? Our friends are going over there in increasing numbers, and sometimes we think we may not be far from going, too—and if we've got to live there through all eternity, we want to know something about its climate. There is only one Guide-Book that I know of which has been issued to tell us of the springtime land, and those who re-

fuse to open its pages and study its maps find themselves in the dark indeed.

You remember those lines of the *Rubaiyat*:

*"Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who  
Before us passed the door of darkness through,  
Not one returns to tell us of the road,  
Which to discover we must travel too."*

*"The revelations of devout and learned,  
Who rose before us and as prophets burned,  
Are all but stories which, awoke from sleep,  
They told their comrades and to sleep returned."*

If you have read Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, you will remember that he touches upon this very idea where he refers to Lazarus, who

*"Left his charnel cave,  
And home to Mary's house returned."*

The poet lingers on the fact that Lazarus did not tell anything of his experiences during the four days of death:

*"Where wert thou, Brother, those four days?  
There lives no record of reply,  
Which, telling what it is to die,  
Had surely added praise to praise."*

Now, there are several attitudes which men take with reference to the question before us. The one is that of evasion. We do not want to talk about unpleasant things, and therefore we do not relish being asked where we expect to be after death. The Chinese people have long lived under a cloud of superstition, and think that to mention the name of any evil condition is inviting the evil thing to befall the one who speaks of it. Hence, they are

accustomed to avoid using in conversation any word significant of pain, disease, accident, or other misfortune. In place of such terms they employ roundabout and obscure allusions. We might expect America, governed so largely by intelligent Christian faith, to be free from such superstition as this; and yet, are we not all guilty of childish superstition in our universal reluctance to take upon our lips the simple word "death"? One is reminded of that frightened French king who had forbidden any of his courtiers to use in his presence any reference to death; and one of them unintentionally, one day, happening to use the expression "the late King of Spain," the monarch demanded what he meant by that, to which the courtier replied: "That, Your Majesty, is only a title which the modern kings of Spain have taken to using." I remember reading of a conversation between some prominent literary men one evening at a dinner table. The talk turned upon the immortality of the soul, when one of them impatiently said: "Oh, well, if you insist on asking me about it, I suppose I shall live on forever, but I wish you would not talk about such unpleasant subjects."

Then there is another attitude which we might call the attitude of agnosticism. The agnostic says: "We can't know anything about the future: therefore, why ask about it? 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.'" One evening when the bulletin-board outside the church announced the topic of my evening sermon as "Is There a Future Life?" I found a scribbled notice on the

board immediately after the words of the topic. The statement read something like this: "You can't know, and nobody else can know. Why, therefore, do you deceive the people?" Of course we can't know what happens after death aside from revelation, because in matters which we cannot experience in this life we are dependent upon the statements of those who have experienced them: and so the man who denies the resurrection of Jesus naturally becomes an agnostic, and waves his hands with a gesture of impatience, and says, "Nobody knows." But this solution does not satisfy us. We cannot help wondering what the great adventure into the unknown may mean. We cannot help asking ourselves something about what we will be and where we will live. I read the other day that it was a great thing to know that science had robbed death of its terrors; and then it chanced that at the very next moment my eyes fell upon William Watson's plaintive cry about the uncertainties of the future, and I saw that for him, at least, science had not robbed death of its terrors, for he paints for us in somber words the meaning of what to him is the victory of the grave and the sting of death. In his poem, "The Great Misgiving," after some brave attempts to wave the problem away, he honestly expresses his dread in these pathetic words:

*"Ah, but the Apparition—the dumb sign—  
The beckoning finger, bidding me forego  
The fellowship, the converse, and the wine,  
The songs, the festal glow!"*

“And ah, to know not, while with friends I sit,  
    And while the purple joy is passed about,  
Whether 'tis ampler day divinelier lit,  
    Or homeless night without;

“And whether, stepping forth, my soul shall see  
    New prospects, or fall sheer—a blinded thing!  
There is, O Grave, thy hourly victory,  
    And there, O Death, thy sting.”

There is a third attitude which we call the attitude of dogmatism. It is represented to us very frequently in the New Testament by the objections of the Sadducees to the teachings of Jesus concerning the dead. The Sadducees were the rationalists of Christ's time, and they denied the resurrection, future retribution, and any continuance of personal being after death. They seemed to adhere to the older teachings of the Old Testament, in which for the most part nothing is allowed concerning the dead but a thin, shadowy existence in Sheol. Jesus, of course, repudiates the Sadducean view and endorses that of the Pharisees. When the Sadducees came to Him with their catch-question in Mark 12:18, Jesus replied that the dead are really alive and in a state of consciousness; and so in the narrative of the rich man and Lazarus, He seems to teach the soul's direct and immediate entrance upon a new and conscious state, as also He did in His words to the dying thief, “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

There is a fourth attitude which I should call the attitude of scientific investigation. The true scientist is the man who goes into his laboratory with

open mind, willing to follow whithersoever the truth may lead him. Such a man is Dr. Alexis Carrel, who made a communication to the French Academy some time ago in which he placed the whole subject of death in a new light. He has made many experiments on the tissues of animals a short time after death, and he has proven that the tissues of the body, presumably dead, might actually remain alive for a considerable period. Without going into the technicalities of his researches, his experiments seem to indicate that every function of life save consciousness may be kept up for some time after so-called death has taken place. We may await with calm interest any discoveries that he and other students make along this line, resting assured that science and religion are not enemies, but friends, and we may get a new light on the miracles of Jesus in raising the dead to life again.

But aside from these and all other attitudes, the position which concerns us is that of reverent inquiry into what the Scriptures have to say on the subject before us. Here at once we come upon differences of interpretation. Here is a group of honest men, let us say, who are anxious to find what the Bible says and willing to believe what it says, and yet they do not agree as to what it teaches. You see we are Protestants, and not Romanists. There is something very comfortable about having an infallible Church to interpret the Scriptures for you, so that you do not have to do any thinking for yourself. You can get your thinking done while you wait, as it were. But we Prot-

estants believe that the Scripture is of private, individual interpretation; and hence, since God has given us reason and individuality, some of us emphasize one passage of Scripture and some another. My purpose will be to tell you in brief what views have principally been held during the years, and then, finally, what view our church holds in its Confession of Faith.

*I. One View is that Known as the Sleep of the Soul*

The condition of the disembodied spirit from the hour of death until the general resurrection is one to which the Bible references are few and vague. As early as the middle of the third century the view was held by certain Arabians that the intermediate state was one of sleep or unconsciousness; that is to say, that the soul remained in the body and went to sleep with it in the grave, and there remained until the resurrection, at which time it became conscious again, and the body was raised, and the result was the complete personality, body and spirit, in the future life. This heresy has been held ever since the third century, and from time to time revived, and as often combatted. Archbishop Whately gave the weight of his influence to this doctrine many years ago. I think there are very few in this day and age who hold to this view, but I mention it as one of the views which is held even now by certain minor sects, and as a view which is so plausibly put forward, especially by one or two denominations, that it is likely to deceive the very elect.

*Soul*

You will ask, What possible Scripture authority can there be for such a view as this? Well, the Bible speaks of death as a sleep, and of Christians as those who sleep in Jesus; and if there were nothing else on the subject in the Scriptures, you might think perhaps that the reference was to the soul as well as to the body. But we must compare Scripture with Scripture. That is the trouble with our one-sided friends who pick upon one verse here and another there, but close their eyes to equally important Scriptures. One does not see how those who read the Bible whole and true can entertain this opinion. Stephen saw the heavens opened, and Jesus, not as dead, but standing at the right hand of God. His last words were, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Jesus said to the dying thief, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." Paul exclaimed that he desired to "depart and be with Christ, which is far better;" but Paul surely was not anxious to leave this world and remain unconscious for two thousand years and then to call that "far better."

Here, for example, is a passage from David Brainerd's last days: "Lord's Day, September 27, 1747.—I was born on a Sabbath day, and I have a reason to think I was new born on a Sabbath day. I am almost in eternity. I long to be there. I long to be in heaven, praising and glorifying God with the holy angels." October 6 he lay as if he were dying. He was heard to utter in broken whispers such expressions as these: "He will come; He will not tarry; I shall soon be in glory; I shall soon

glorify God with the angels." But Archbishop Whately thinks that for nearly two hundred years Brainerd has been utterly unconscious, and that all these anticipations are not to be fulfilled for perhaps several thousand years.

## *II. I Pass on to the Second View, Which is the Doctrine of Hades*

The word Hades is a Greek word which literally means "unseen," or "the unseen place." The doctrine is that there is a place intermediate between heaven and hell, which is the abode of the dead between death and resurrection. The blessed dead go to the paradise division of Hades, where they are in a state of happiness, though it is far inferior to that happiness which is in store for them in heaven. The wicked dead go to another region of Hades, where they await in misery the judgment of the Great Day and the infliction of the punishment of hell.

Dr. E. L. Eaton has done a fine piece of work in his special study of Old Testament and New Testament terms describing this intermediate state. The Hebrew word Sheol is used to name the place where the departed go. It doesn't mean grave or oblivion, or heaven or hell. References make plain that it is a place of conscious existence for all mankind, which they enter at once after death. But it is only a temporary state, as we are often told that God will redeem souls from Sheol.

When the Greek translators turned the Old Testament into Greek, they translated Sheol by the

word Hades (sixty-one out of sixty-five times). What does Hades mean, as Greek authors used it? The same thing as Sheol: the place of departed spirits irrespective of their merit or demerit.

But here you come upon an interesting and significant fact. This idea of putting everybody together in one house after death, whether good or bad, somehow offended the sense of justice of mankind and you find that the idea of two divisions of this intermediate state grew up. The old Greeks did it first; they separated between Tartarus on the one side and the Elysian fields on the other. The Hebrews made a similar distinction also; they called one place Gehenna or Hell and the other place Paradise or Abraham's bosom. When you come over to the New Testament you find also two divisions in this sphere, separated by a great gulf fixed. The one is the Lower Sheol or Tartarus; the other on the other side of the gulf is the Upper Sheol which they also called Paradise or Abraham's bosom; a kind of park or suburb of the Holy City to be entered later on. Jesus went to Paradise from the cross and took with Him the soul of the penitent thief. You remember He said to Mary on the morning of the resurrection: "Touch me not for I am not yet ascended to my Father"—hence He hadn't been in heaven.

Many Bible scholars distinguish thus between two stages of Hades: Hades before the ascension of Christ, and Hades since the ascension of Christ. The passages in which the word occurs, according to Scofield, make it clear that Hades was formerly

in two divisions: the abodes of the saved, and of the lost. The Paradise division of Hades was called by the Jews "Abraham's bosom." The blessed dead were here. Here is where the believing malefactor was to go on the day of his death. A great gulf separated between this division and the place of Dives and other tormented and guilty souls. These scholars show, however, that the Epistle to the Ephesians teaches that when Jesus ascended on high He led with Him a multitude of captives. We are told that He had previously descended first into the lower parts of the earth (that is, the Paradise division of Hades). And so they believe that Paradise is now in the immediate presence of God, and hence the blessed dead who die in the Lord are absent from the body but at home with the Lord. The wicked dead in Hades, and the righteous dead at home with God, alike await the resurrection and the last day.

### *III. The Doctrine of Purgatory*

The doctrine of Purgatory of the Roman Catholic Church strikes its roots back in the early Christian centuries. It is connected with the idea of an intermediate state, where the imperfect are rendered fit for heaven by a process of discipline. The primitive view was that Paradise was encircled by a sea of fire (some said water), in which the blemishes of souls were consumed before admission to heaven. Fire is often referred to in Scripture as a symbol of purification, as well as punishment and damnation. But there is no definite allusion to any

process of purification in the period between death and resurrection.

The logical background of Purgatory is this: Christ delivers from sins before baptism. Sins coming after baptism must be atoned for by penance or good works. If death finds us with the account still unsettled, we must even up the score by purgatorial pains.

Cardinal Gibbons, in *The Faith of Our Fathers*, tells us: "The Catholic Church teaches that, beside a place of eternal torments for the wicked and everlasting rest for the righteous, there exists in the next life a middle state of temporal punishment allotted for those who have died in venial sin, or who have not satisfied the justice of God for sins already forgiven. She also teaches that, although the souls consigned to this intermediate state commonly called Purgatory cannot help themselves, they may be aided by the sufferings of the faithful on earth. The existence of Purgatory naturally implies the correlative dogma—the utility of praying for the dead; for the souls consigned to this middle state have not reached the termination of their journey. They are still exiles from heaven and are fit subjects for divine clemency."

The following are a few of the Scripture verses which are supposed to give foundation to the doctrine of Purgatory:

Judas Maccabeus, at the close of a battle, ordered prayers and sacrifices for his slain comrades.—II Maccabees 12:43-45.

"But whosoever shall blaspheme the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in that which is to come."—Matthew 12:32. (The inference is that some sins not forgiven in this world may be forgiven in the next.)

"The fire shall prove every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, he shall receive a reward. But if any man's work be burned he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire."—I Corinthians 3:13-15.

I Peter 3:18-20, the passage in which Christ went and preached unto the spirits in prison. They hold that Christ didn't go to heaven, for it is not prison. Nor to hell, for it is useless to preach to the lost who can't be saved. Hence He must have gone to some middle state to tell its inhabitants that the hour of their deliverance was at hand.

#### *IV. The Final Answer is the Orthodox Evangelical View*

The doctrine of the Presbyterian Church is thus stated in our Confession of Faith: "The bodies of men after death return to dust and see corruption; but their souls (which neither die nor sleep), having an immortal substance, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous, being made then perfect in holiness, are received into the higher heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the Great Day. Besides these two places

Orthodox

for souls departed from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none" (*Confession of Faith*, Chap. 32, Sec. I).

Let me, in closing, make a personal application. It is, of course, a comforting and blessed thought that our beloved dead are at rest in the presence of the King. I do not for one moment believe that they have ceased to be. From what we know of earliest records of primitive races, the notion of an unseen world beyond daily life is coeval with the beginning of man. It is the way the first men met the problem of death, and it is the way men ever since have met it. The notions of this future life before Christ came are crude and vague. Matthew Arnold makes Thor say over the corpse of Balder:

*"Remember thou dwellest in the darksome land,  
And talkest with the feeble tribes of ghosts."*

It has always been hard for men to picture life separate from the body they know. Jesus was curiously silent about many of these things, and it is well for us not to pretend to be wise above that which is written. I like those words of Dr. Lyman Abbott: "I would not, if I could, stand at the open window and peer into the unknown beyond. I am sure that He whose mercies are new every morning and fresh every evening, who brings into every week of my life a new surprise, and awaits in every experience a new discovery of His love, has for me some future of glad surprise which I would not forecast if I could." I close with that fine expression of Matthew Arnold, in which he utters his

wish for the kind of parting he desires, and it is the wish of a man who looks not out to blank darkness, but to a future life the exact nature and terms of which he leaves to the great eternal mind and heart of God:

*“Spare me the whispering, crowded room,  
The friends who come and gape and go,  
The ceremonious air of gloom—  
All, which makes death a hideous show.*

*“Nor bring to see me cease to live  
Some doctor full of phrase and fame,  
To shake his sapient head and give  
The ill he cannot cure a name.*

*“Nor fetch to take the accustomed toll  
Of the poor sinner bound for death,  
His brother-doctor of the soul—  
To canvass with official breath*

*“The future and its viewless things—  
That undiscovered mystery,  
Which one who feels death’s winnowing wings  
Must needs read clearer, sure, than he!*

*“Bring none of these; but let me be,  
While all around in silence lies,  
Moved to the window near, and see  
Once more, before my dying eyes,*

*“Bathed in the sacred dews of morn,  
The wide aerial landscape spread—  
The world which was ere I was born,  
The world which lasts when I am dead;*

*“Thus feeling, gazing, might I grow  
Composed, refreshed, ennobled, clear;  
Then willing let my spirit go  
To work or wait, elsewhere or here!”*

## VIII

### IS REINCarnation A CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE?

*“It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”*—HEBREWS 9:27.

 T is a solemn thing to be born, to live and to die. Every life has these three chapters and each one of them is important. The reason they are so significant is that they come once and pass. If I could be born several times, then if I didn't like my first birth I would go back again to the presence of God and try it again, like the boys in the game who try it over if they miss the first time. I would see if I couldn't be born on the boulevard, if I didn't like the slum. So if I didn't like my first life I'd have another fling at it. And if I found the experience of death interesting, I'd probably want to repeat it. But if the Scripture of the text be true, I get only one chance at dying. If I die of pneumonia, I do not die by drowning. If I die by accident, I do not die by suicide. The score-keeper gives me only one option. Life isn't like the shooting-gallery with three shots at the bull's-eye; and hence the Proprietor warns us to aim carefully and aim high lest we miss the mark. And that is just what one Greek word for sin means—“missing the mark.” So

"watch your step." My text says, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

Why do we die? Science says it is the law of nature, an inevitable incident in the chemical development of animal organism. From the moment of birth we carry in us seeds of death. Death may be delayed or hastened, but it's certain. Faith says death is a law of God's government. One modern writer holds that "Death is the very masterpiece of the divine justice." "God's way of tracing out before our eyes," says Canon Liddon, "what sin is." Sin has lodged itself somewhere in the complex recesses of our being where body and spirit meet; and in death, God breaks up this association of body and spirit in the effort to locate the germ of this disease. Hence death is just the manifestation in the physical sphere of the disorder of sin in the spiritual sphere.

So we all die sooner or later. There is a beautiful story of Buddha and a poor woman. She came to ask him if any medicine could bring back to life her dead child. He said there was one thing. "Go get me a handful of common mustard-seed; only, bring it from some home where neither father nor mother, child or servant has died." She went from door to door but could find no such house. With heavy heart she went back to Buddha and he said she must not think of her grief alone, but also of the griefs of others.

John Asgill distinguished himself years ago by maintaining, in a learned treatise, that death is not

a necessity and to escape it is a human possibility. But his biography, like others, closes with the words, "And he died." For death is a black camel which kneels down at every man's door, as the Persian proverb says.

Life is much like that Indian fig-tree which grows for a certain time up from the ground, toward the sky, and then in fullness of growth the branches bend and grow toward the ground. From dust we come, and to dust return.

Turning, now, to the subject before us, let us ask at the outset: What is reincarnation? Of course we understand what the word literally means, but to get exactly the Theosophists' idea, let us listen to the definition of one of their lecturers:

"What we call 'birth' is the assumption of the physical limitation by an immortal individual, by means of a perishable personality. Death is its disassociation. After the death of the body, the soul, in an intermediate world, gathers into itself the experiences of the life just past, and, after a long interval passed on higher planes of being, returns to incarnation again in another body, linked with another personality. In each successive incarnation the soul is able, through repeated experiments, to mould its perishable part into a . . . more sensitive vehicle . . . and communicates to it as much as it is able of its own life. But death intervenes again and again before the precious secret of immortality is imparted to the personality. 'If a man cannot understand it before the falling asunder of the body, he must take new bodies in the world of creation.'"

This lecturer, however, has not told us of the tre-

mendous length of time necessary for the soul to complete its migrations. Our earth (so they teach) is one of a chain of seven planets, most of which are entirely unknown to astronomy. Man is under compulsion to visit these spheres in a series of rounds. When an individual arrives on a planet for the first time in the course of a round, he has to work through seven races before he passes on to the next. Each of these races occupies a long time, for within the limits of each race there are seven subdivisional races and again, within each subdivision there are seven branch races. Through all these subdivisions the unit must pass during his stay on earth, each time he arrives there, on a tour of the planetary system.

Naturally we ask: Is there no end to all this? When does one get to heaven and what is it like when one gets there? The answer is that there is a temporary immunity from traveling in the bliss of Devachan. It is only the exceptional criminal who is deprived of this boon. Yet even those enjoying it are not at rest, for they gradually experience an exhaustion of force which passes into semi-consciousness and ends in "birth into another personality." The desire for active life arises even amid the bliss of heaven; a restlessness which causes another incarnation in which the individual reaps the fruit of all his former evil deeds. Until his score has been paid, a man must be repeatedly reborn and given a lot corresponding to his antecedent record.

These glib lecturers do not tell us, as Dr. Harlan

P. Beach, of Yale University, does, that the missionaries in India are often listened to by the Hindus, outcasts though they are, for the sake of gaining merit, for "cutting short the eighty-four," that is, for reducing the round of transmigrations which are popularly said to be eighty-four lakhs in number, that is 8,400,000. If some of our Americans who so easily take up with this idea of reincarnation could realize the burden it imposes on the Hindus, they might be less ready to adopt this belief.

So much for the meaning of the term. Now for its discussion.

### *I. Is the Doctrine Taught in the Old Testament?*

Let us, first of all, take up the question as to whether this teaching of reincarnation can find any support in the Word of God, which is the final test to the Christian. Is reincarnation merely the teaching of the adepts or is it a Jewish and a Christian doctrine, as its advocates claim? There are certain Biblical statements which are quoted as suggesting the doctrine, although they by no means prove it.

First comes the hardening of Pharaoh's heart as recorded in Exodus. Origen, who was one of the few fathers to hold this view, says that God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart was intended to show him the evil of his ways, so that in future lives, having learned the lesson that it was a bitter thing to sin against God, he might turn to righteousness.

Then there is the case of Jeremiah. Jeremiah 1:5 says: "The word of the Lord came unto me,

saying, Before I formed thee I knew thee, and before thou wast born I sanctified thee and ordained thee a prophet." Mrs. Besant herself admits that this verse could be explained in other ways, but both Origen and Jerome refer to it as teaching the pre-existence of Jeremiah, holding that God could not justly give a man the honor of being born as a prophet unless, by righteous living in some former life, he had proved himself worthy of that great honor.

There is the case of Jacob and Esau, referred to in Malachi 1:3: "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated." Origen says that man is born free, and it would be unjust to suppose that God predetermined one man to happiness and another to sorrow without good reason. If God loved one of these men and hated the other before either of them was born, the only way to make Him a just God is to say that Esau was merely reaping the fruit of past evil, and Jacob the fruit of past good.

A fourth Old Testament reference is one which passes over into New Testament fulfilment. Malachi 4:5 tells us that Elijah the prophet is to come again before the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and when John the Baptist came, Jesus said of him: "If ye will receive it, this is Elias which was to come." To be sure, John said he was not Elijah, and it is clear that what Jesus meant was that John came in the spirit and power of Elijah. There are a great many similarities in the way the two men dressed and lived and preached and ate, so that it is not surprising that those who take

Jesus literally should regard this as a very clear case of reincarnation.

There is one more reference, not in the Old Testament, but in the apochryphal book, "The Wisdom of Solomon" (9:15), in which Solomon says of himself: "I was a witty child and had a good spirit. Yea, rather being good, I came into a body undefiled." As we do not admit this book as canonical, we will not linger on this reference. It is significant that the clearest reference is in a book outside the canon.

## *II. We Now Come to a Second Question: Is the Doctrine of Reincarnation Supported by the New Testament?*

We notice first a reference in John 5:14. Here was the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda who had been sick for thirty-eight years, and when Jesus cured him He said: "Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more lest a worse thing befall thee." Some say that Jesus was referring to some outrageous sin the man had committed in the rashness of youth, a repetition of which would cause sorcer punishment still. Others, however, feel that he had transgressed in a former existence and was born ill as a result.

Next we notice the question of the disciples in John 9:2 about the blind man. As Jesus passed by He saw a man blind from his birth and the disciples thoughtlessly asked the Master: "Lord, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Now, how could the man possibly have

sinned before he was born unless it were in a previous incarnation? So, again, the disciples' question taken literally, seems to point to their belief in a former state.

Paul's text in Ephesians 1:4 says this: "God, who hath chosen us before the foundation of the world. . . ." Of course, this is merely Paul's doctrine of election with which we are so familiar, but our Theosophical friends would find in it the fact that we must have been living somewhere before the foundation of the world for God to love us then.

Fourth, a text in Revelation 3:2 is sometimes referred to as follows: the Son of Man, addressing one of the seven churches of Asia, says about the overcomer, "I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go forth no more." Some suppose this means the repeated goings forth of the soul on its incarnations until at last the journey is done and it goes forth no more.

Last of all, Christ Himself is explained by Origen as an illustration of the law of repeated incarnations, although, of course, there is no hint whatever of this in Scripture. Celsus had attacked the character of Jesus and Origen argues that His birth must have been pure—that by long practice the choice of righteousness had become second nature to Christ's soul, so that there was no possibility of sin in His human nature.

### *III. Did the Fathers of the Early Church Support This Doctrine?*

Christian theology takes its rise largely in the

writings of the Church Fathers, a group of men who arose in the early Christian centuries, some in the East, some in the West, as interpreters of the Scriptures and expounders of its truth. Some of them were very learned men and have profoundly influenced by their writings the form of faith which has descended to us in the Christian Church. The question before us is: did any of them hold and teach a belief in pre-existence, transmigration, reincarnation or metempsychosis?

For answer: It is true that Origen and Jerome held this view, and after them a few scattered thinkers through the centuries, but it has never sufficiently appealed to students of the Bible to be adopted by any Christian Church, hence we do not find it discussed at length in any Christian theology. Origen taught that all spirits come forth from God endowed with free will; some of these spirits held to the path of righteousness and came to be what we call "angels." Others turned from duty and then passed into the human race to recover by right living the angel condition. Still others descended yet deeper into sin and became evil spirits or devils. He taught that angels might become men; men, angels; and even evil spirits might rise to the condition of men or angels; this being all a question of the degree of development or growth in grace.

#### *IV. Is Reincarnation Taught by Other Systems Aside from Theosophy?*

The fact of the matter is that the doctrine of

reincarnation was taken over into Theosophy from Hinduism, although in doing so, the change was made of insisting that man might not be reborn as an animal. The borrowing is so apparent and the inconsistency so glaring that it becomes rather humorous to one acquainted with the facts. Reincarnation was not incorporated into Theosophy until after the leaders had gone to India. When Madame Blavatsky wrote *Isis Unveiled* she was in America, and in that volume she repudiated reincarnation as a normal happening and regarded it as highly exceptional. (See her book, Part I, pages 351-352.) She said then that neither Buddha nor Pythagoras meant to teach a literal transmigration. In the face of these plain statements, her later attempt in *The Key to Theosophy* (pages 187-8), to explain away her former denial becomes interesting. Olcott, her associate, stood by the facts and said that at the time of their embarking for India (December 17, 1878) both Madame Blavatsky and himself thought reincarnation very exceptional, and that the doctrine was not fully launched until 1881-2. (See *Old Diary Leaves*, pages 283-9). Then the question comes: If Theosophy has been handed down by revelation from the adepts (these wise White Brothers of Thibet) why should they have made the mistake of contradicting themselves? This error on their part Olcott gave up as insoluble.

Of course the doctrine of reincarnation was found in the Brahmanism of India, as any student of comparative religions would know. Brahman-

ism holds out to its devotees, as the goal of salvation, the escape from sentient existence. If we ask a Hindu what is the ultimate good he is trying to reach through religion, he will answer: "liberation." The soul must be freed from bondage to the senses and, to do this, must pass through many bodies or forms of life. Whether the passage be short or long depends upon whether a man's deeds be good or ill, pleasing or displeasing to the gods. This belief in transmigration is said to be common among all primitive races.

#### *V. What Place Does the Doctrine of Reincarnation Hold in Modern Thought?*

Let us go back first to Plato. Plato, in his *Phædo*, used this as the chief consideration in his noble argument for immortality. He said that the intuitive ideas we have—such as conceptions of right and wrong, God, time, space, etc., are merely reminiscences of those learned in a previous state of being. Now, if the soul had knowledge before it entered the body, it must have knowledge after it leaves the body; hence the argument for immortality. But Plato was mistaken. These intuitive ideas are made possible by the very constitution of the soul. The fact that they are not derived from sense by no means proves that we have lived before. After Plato, Philo and Origen both held the same doctrine. In more modern times, Kant and Julius Muller have advocated it in Germany and Edward Beecher in America, on the ground that the inborn depravity of the human will can be explained only

by supposing a personal act of self-determination before the present life began. Professor Knight, the biographer of Wordsworth, advocated the same thought in Scotland within the last century. The heretical sect of the Albigenses held this doctrine. In the seventeenth century, the Chaplain of Charles II. wrote a book favoring this view, and in the eighteenth century there was an outburst of interest in it. Thus there have been outcroppings of the belief at intervals all through the years.

The poets, in certain cases, have taught the same. Virgil sang as follows:

*"All these when centuries ten times told  
The wheel of destiny have rolled;  
The voice divine from far and wide  
Calls up to Lethe's river-side,  
That earthward they may pass once more,  
Remembering not the things before;  
And with a blind propension yearn  
To fleshly bodies to return."*

Sir Walter Scott also presented the idea in poetic fashion, having had the experience of finding familiar a landscape which he knew he was seeing for the first time. If we seem to recall what we are sure has never happened to us in this world, it must have happened in some world we inhabited before we entered upon this—so he argued. This circumstance is probably just an illusion of the memory—the mistaking of a part for the whole. Everybody, of course, knows Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality":

*"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,*

*Hath had elsewhere its setting, and cometh from afar;  
Not in entire forgetfulness  
Nor yet in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God who is our home."*

Tennyson, in "The Two Voices," breathes a similar idea:

*"Moreover, something is or seems,  
That touches me with mystic gleams,  
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—  
Of something felt, like something here;  
Of something done, I know not where;  
Such as no language may declare."*

#### *VI. What Has Been the Historic Position of the Christian Church on this Doctrine, and What is its Attitude Today?*

Historically, three theories have been advanced as to the origin of the soul:

(a) *Traducianism*, which says that the soul of each individual is produced by the law of generation, and is as truly derived from the parents as is the body. The whole man—body and soul—is begotten by his ancestors.

(b) *Creationism*, which has always been the common doctrine of the Church, that the soul of the child is not derived from the parents, but is created by the immediate agency of God.

(c) *Pre-existence*, which has been held under two forms, that of Plato and that of Origen. This practically began and ended with Origen as far as the Church is concerned. It was rejected, however, both by the Greek and the Latin Church and

can lay no claim to being a Scriptural doctrine on any fair interpretation of the Book. Hence, the doctrine was formally condemned by the Council of Constantinople, the decree being thus expressed: "Let him be anathema who asserts the fabulous pre-existence of the soul." From that time it dropped out of the thought of the Church as a whole.

We now ask why the doctrine does not appeal to modern Christians. We answer:

(1) *Because of the awful injustice of reincarnation.*

Mr. J. N. Farquhar, author of *Modern Religious Movements in India*, and who has seen the working out of some of these principles at close range, insists that the doctrine of reincarnation, instead of mitigating the injustice of human life, makes the horror greater. If, for example, you tell me that human misery is the consequence of sin committed in a former life; then, if I am comfortable because I was good in a former existence and you are wretched because you were bad in a former life, why should I try to help you? In the last analysis, it is simply a doctrine of selfishness. Who is going to take up the cross and bear it after Christ if this theory holds? Of course, Christ's death on Calvary becomes worse than useless in such a case.

Where is the justice of a doctrine which tells me I did a lot of things of which I am entirely unconscious? We are fond of saying that a clear conscience is a boon, but of what use is a clear conscience if it is ignorant? The laws of all peo-

ple say that it is not fair to hold an idiot responsible for crimes he commits, because he has no sense of responsibility as to what he is doing. It is just as unfair to punish a man for sins of which he knows nothing. Such sin cannot be brought home to the conscience as our own. If, for example, I am arrested for stealing somebody's automobile last Friday, how would I feel if the officer were to say: "Well, of course you don't remember it, and you seem entirely innocent of the crime, but the judge says you did it, so off you go to jail. Just console yourself because the judge says so, and he must know better than you do what you are guilty of." Does such a doctrine as this induce contentment? Yet that is exactly what its advocates claim.

Mrs. Annie Besant says, in a lecture on "Karma": "He may not, cannot know the past careers of which he feels the now effects, but he knows what their quality must have been from the quality of these effects. He reaps as he has sown. It may be sad or pitiable or distracting, but at least it is just." I leave it to you to decide whether it is or not.

(2) *The Church has rejected this doctrine because we have no memory of a previous life.*

When someone asked John the Baptist if he was Elijah he said "No." Theosophists claim that he was, but they can understand his denial, because, as a rule, it is not permitted us to remember our former existences in this earth life. In fact, the only ones who can remember their former experiences are the "Enlightened" ones, that is, "Bud-

dhas" who have the boon of knowing just what happened in other lives. None others have. We can well raise this question: If memory has played me false in one instance, it may do so in another. I may have stolen money yesterday, although I do not remember doing so—and the most precious thing I possess is a clear conscience and an honest memory. If Theosophy takes these from me, no Theosophy for me!

Here is the inconsistency of the doctrine: If a man is denied memory, how can he profit by past experience and previous incarnations? What is the use of going through experiences unless we are to profit by them—and how can we profit by them unless we can remember? The long journey of life seems then a useless one.

(3) *Another objection to this theory is its unfounded optimism.*

If orthodox Christianity made as many pure assumptions as some of the cults do, opponents might well ridicule the foundation of our faith. Theosophy makes a big assumption, viz., that reincarnation always tends to progress. That is untrue to human life. There are profligates today in Los Angeles who are flinging themselves away into sin and wrong. Are they progressing? Of course not. If they keep on going down and down they must land eventually in the body of some brute beast—to follow the teachings of Theosophy to a logical conclusion. "Oh," but Theosophy says, "we don't believe that." Well, whether they do or not, the facts of human life are stronger than unfounded

assumptions, and so the old philosophers and the ancient Hindus were much more logical, for they realized that if this idea of transmigration were once started, there would be no logical stopping place. Theosophy, therefore, is a case of unfounded optimism, insisting that reincarnation tends always to progression. In some instances it certainly tends to retrogression.

Take the case of Mrs. Besant herself. She was alleged to have said that she was a Brahman priest in her last incarnation. Well, if that was true, it was quite a come-down to be plain Mrs. Besant after that honor. Take also Madame Blavatsky. Some of you may remember the furor created in New York City in 1896 when Theosophists declared that this Russian woman had returned from the dead and had been seen on the streets of the city. If so, she evidently returned as herself and not in some higher state, for they recognized her. As one writer has said, reincarnation as taught by Theosophy can be demonstrated to be untrue simply and in a single word: if it were true, the progress of humanity would bring forth in every generation greater and greater men. Certainly this would be so, on the theory of endless progress; but, as a matter of fact, we are not producing super-men. On the contrary, humanity looks back to its mountain-men far in the past. There is surely something wrong. All is evidently not progress.

*Our final objection is that the doctrine is not taught in the Bible, but is contradicted there.*

We quoted certain Scripture verses which are ap-

pealed to by Theosophists as teaching their doctrine. No doubt you feel as I do, that they were but a slender foundation for so big a building. The most that Theosophy can claim is this: that while reincarnation is not clearly taught in the Scriptures, yet it is not contradicted by them. However, even this cannot be conceded, because it seems to be expressly contrary to the plain teaching of the Word of God. Scripture says man was formed in the image of God. Adam was not a fallen spirit. No, he was created good and fell from that estate here in this life, and not in some former stage of being. Scripture says that it was by one man that sin entered the world, and death by sin; hence, there is a causal relation between the sin of Adam and the sinfulness of his posterity. Our present evil world is due partly to the taint we have inherited from our first parents and partly to our own evil acts right here and now; but not at all to transgressions in some former sphere of which we know nothing.

Use your days carefully, then, for this is the only chance at life you are going to have. When someone asked Michelangelo why he painted with such exquisite care he replied: "I paint for eternity." So are we building our lives. God help us to build them well, for when the long day's work is done and sunset comes we may through grace enter the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

## IX

### CAN THE DEAD COMMUNICATE? IF SO, HOW?

*“And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? For the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”—ISAIAH 8:19-20.*

 HERE are three propositions, according to Sir Oliver Lodge, which his book *Raymond* sets forth. The first is that they who have died continue to live. The second is that they who have died are interested in the affairs of survivors. The third is that they who have died are willing, and under certain conditions able, to communicate with survivors. These three propositions are the fundamental ones in the whole case of Spiritualism. The very first question is whether the so-called “dead” are alive and conscious. Of course, if they are not, any sort of communication is manifestly impossible. Then, again, they might be conscious but not at all concerned about human interests and affairs;—they might be so engrossed with the affairs of heaven, or whatever the future life is, that they would have no time to give to mundane concerns. Then, the third and final question is: Supposing they are

living and interested, are they able to have any intercourse with mortal beings, under certain given conditions?

*I. Bearing These Three Propositions in Mind, We Turn to the First of Them: Do the Dead Continue to Live?*

Four main theories have been held, as we have seen in a former chapter.

- (a) The "Soul-Sleeping" theory, which holds that death means unconscious sleep.
- (b) The theory of Hades.
- (c) The theory of Purgatory.
- (d) The orthodox theory held by most of the evangelical churches of the world.

Now, the first of these (the theory of the sleep of the soul) closes this question at once. If the dead are asleep, they cannot talk to us. Hence, the Seventh Day Adventists and all who agree with them on soul-sleeping are violently opposed to Spiritualism, for it contradicts the fundamental idea of the future life according to their viewpoint. It will not be necessary to review their doctrine in detail. They hold (in a word) that man is mortal and that only God has immortality. They believe that immortality is bestowed only on those who accept the Gospel, and is to be given to the righteous at the end of the world. They take certain Scriptures which seem to teach that the dead are unconscious—that they have no knowledge of anything which takes place on the earth—and that only on the resurrection day shall they be awakened

out of sleep. It is not our purpose to argue for the falsity of this position. Suffice it to say that there is a much greater array of Scripture texts against them than with them on this question; and that the whole Christian world, generally speaking, is a unit in believing in the continued conscious existence of the spirit after death. Hence, the first of Sir Oliver Lodge's positions is established, not by the testimony of the book *Raymond*, but by the statements of the Word of God. The dead are really alive.

## *II. The Next Question, Then, Is: Are They Interested in the Affairs of Survivors?*

Somebody once asked a question of John Watson as to this feature of the heavenly life. He replied that he believed the departed were interested in what was going on here on earth for the reason that Moses and Elias, when they came back, talked with Jesus about His decease which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem. They were not entirely engrossed with heavenly affairs, but had still some interest in earth. Turning from the Word of God to the theories of Sir Oliver Lodge, if the communications of *Raymond* are to be accepted as real, the question must be answered in the affirmative; but of this we cannot tell. It is to be presumed, if memory continues, that if a father, for example, is suddenly removed from the scenes of his earthly life, and if he leaves a family of loved ones behind him, that he does not all-of-a-sudden give his entire attention to harps and palm branches, but that he is at least somewhat con-

cerned about their struggle for a livelihood and interested in all their vicissitudes. When somebody asked Dr. Watson how this could be true if heaven were a place of perfect happiness, he replied that sympathy might be one element of heaven's bliss.

There are some who believe that amnesia takes place in the transition from one life to the other, and that this forgetfulness is the cause of the obscurity, incoherence and incompleteness of so many of the messages from the other side. But if bodily continuity has been destroyed, the continuity of memory must be preserved if our personality is to be preserved. "We are immortal and we never forget." The Christian doctrine of the future life, without the necessity of resorting to Spiritualism, does include a means and method for communication between the living and the departed. Does this surprise you? Let us see. Twice at least it is written in the Christian's Bible that the prayers of the saints ascend like incense before the throne. Many Christians believe that intercessions are made by the departed for those they have left behind, to whom they are bound by ties of unbreakable affection. So also, Christians on earth will pray to the Father, asking that those in His care may not be forgotten. So the living and the dead are united by prayer in mutual love; for thus the whole round world is tied by golden chains about the feet of God. The means of communion is God and the method is prayer. Hence, the Bible apparently answers the second question in the affirma-

tive;—the departed are interested in the affairs of survivors on earth.

*III. We Now Come to the Third of the Three Propositions: Are the Dead Willing and Able, Under Certain Conditions, to Communicate with Survivors?*

This is the big question. We cannot hope to answer it in detail, but we may present certain considerations of interest. Let us call to mind a few Scripture verses.

Job said: "I shall go the way whence I shall not return."

David found comfort, after the death of his son, in this thought: "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

In Job 7:9 we read these words: "He that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more."

Think of the picture Jesus gives of Dives in Hades: He asked Abraham to go to his five brothers and warn them not to come to that place of torment. When Abraham refused he said: "Nay, Father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they would repent." This would imply most certainly that Dives did not think it possible for himself to do the very thing he asked Abraham to do in his place, and which Abraham refused to do.

It would seem, from these quotations, that there was no expectation on the part of these Scripture characters of returning to earth.

We turn, now, not to the Bible, but to the testimony of Spiritualists themselves as to the difficulty of communication. Some of these may be found in Judge Edmunds' Introduction to the second volume of *Spiritualism*, written by Edmunds and Dexter.

The medium may be dishonest. Judge Edmunds, Dr. Peebles and other authorities on Spiritualism are among the first to admit the fake communications of pretenders who prey upon the grief of the bereaved for financial gain.

Again, the medium may be honestly mistaken, and may confuse the operations of his own mind with the influence of a spirit. This is a tremendous difficulty, great enough to undermine the whole doctrine of Spiritualism; for the more psychology is studied and the mysterious deeps of personality, telepathy and the subconscious mind are sounded, the more do we see how much can be accomplished by the interaction of mind on mind, without any reference to the spirits on the other side of the divide.

A third difficulty is that the spirit operating on the mind of the medium may be false and deceptive. There are confessedly bad as well as good spirits, a point to be discussed more fully later. Christianity bids us "try the spirits" whether they be of God or not.

A physician in Chicago, some years ago, invited Dr. Rice to visit a nearby city where an ex-member of Congress had fitted up a hall in which the spirits were alleged to make wonderful demonstrations.

He offered to pay the expenses of the trip. Dr. Rice said he would go on one condition: that he was given some test by which to judge the character of the spirits. He had no desire to meet evil spirits, but would be happy to meet good ones. This condition spoiled the trip, for while Dr. Hare could make machines to test the presence of spirits, he could not invent a machine by which to test their moral character.

Another difficulty is that the spirit may be ignorant and may wholly mislead the seeker. Spiritualism admits that some spirits are more developed than others; some more prudent, some more rash; some more intelligent; others more ignorant. "From this source," Judge Edmunds admits, "must necessarily flow an element of uncertainty."

A fifth and surpassing difficulty is that the medium may not convey correctly the message. Prof. Hare had great trouble in getting messages from a spirit who said he was his father. Speaking of the first medium he said: "The ideas furnished were too much blended with her own prepossessions. Hence, although many pages had been written, they were rejected, and resort was had to another medium."

Judge Edmunds enumerates no fewer than thirteen conditions which may affect the reliability of messages, among others being the physical and mental states of the medium; the locality, the condition of those present; the passiveness of the medium; want of confidence; etc. In fact, after

mentioning seventeen causes of uncertainty, the Judge says: "I do not mean here to say that I have enumerated all the impeaching evidence that may be found in this matter, nor can I well do so in the limits allotted to this paper." All these admissions from one of the most prominent Spiritualists of his time ought to make us careful about rushing ahead without stopping to investigate the perils of the way.

The late Dr. I. K. Funk, editor-in-chief of the Standard Dictionary, said that the greatest hindrance to the identity hypothesis was the hopeless contradiction of "cross" messages. Dr. Funk was for years a student of psychic phenomena and knew many mediums. He said that one of the best mediums he ever met told him the spirit of Joseph Parker wished him to do a certain thing. Three days later he was with another medium whom he knew to be honest. Parker said he was present, but denied all knowledge of the previous interview and declared he had said nothing of the kind. Subsequently Parker reported himself present at a dozen séances, through as many different mediums, but never in any one of them did he admit a previous interview with Dr. Funk. He said this experience was typical of a number of others he had had. He thought that the one explanation of this lack of harmony was that these spirits were not what they claimed to be.

In view of the above difficulties, communication is difficult to say the least. Some further light may be thrown on the question; but the methods of

manifestation of the so-called spirits should prove interesting. Sir Alfred Russell Wallace, the world-renowned zoologist, gives a summary of the manifestations under the two general heads of Physical and Mental Phenomena. Under the head of the Physical are, first of all:—Levitation and Table Rapping. Apollonius of Tyana, in his *Life of Philostratus*, says that he has seen the Brahmins of India elevated two cubits above the surface of the earth, walking in the air. The reason of this was that whatever they did elevated above the earth would be more acceptable to the god of the sun. When they struck the earth with their divining-rods, it rose up like the sea does under the power of the wind. They themselves ascended into the air and chanted a hymn of praise. It is significant that Spiritualism still practices levitation today, as did the priesthood of old. Dr. Cranford, lecturer on mechanical engineering in the Municipal Technical Institute of Belfast, fully investigated the subject of raps and levitation. It appears that he saw a wooden table repeatedly raised to a height of two feet or more from the ground, without being in contact with a person or material object of any kind. This occurred not in a capricious manner, but regularly on demand. He found that when the table was thus levitated, the weight of the medium was increased by an amount practically equal to the weight of the table, as though the medium were lifting it. Dr. Cranford was therefore forced to infer the existence of a rigid something connecting the medium and the table. This "something" was

invisible and impalpable, for a thin rod could be passed between the medium and the table, in fact, all around the table without effect. Dr. Cranford came to the conclusion that the forces were under intelligent control of some kind. Of what kind is a question for theologians and philosophers to solve, but he concerned himself with the physical phenomena. These are the conclusions of a trained scientist, and not an ignorant observer.

One of the favorite methods of table-tipping is for a few individuals to seat themselves around a table, all laying hands upon it lightly when, shortly, the table begins to move. Questions are then asked of it as if it were intelligent. These questions are answered by the table through its tilting up and down. One tilt means a negative answer; two, a doubtful one; three, an affirmative. Through the table, the invisible agent is sometimes addressed. The form of question is this: "Will the spirit tell us so-and-so," or "Will A or B answer our question?" Thus, intercourse is supposed to be had between the living and the world of spirits through a table!

A second physical form of manifestation is the chemical, in which the operator is preserved from the effects of fire. For example, a medium will take from the grate a red-hot mass of coals in his bare hands, without apparently experiencing any unpleasant effect.

A third form of the physical is direct writing (in distinction from automatic writing). "A pencil will rise up and write, apparently of itself. Some-

times drawings of many colors are produced and the colors found to be wet. Sometimes a slate is laid over a bit of slate-pencil and the sound of writing is heard. All sorts of messages are received, poems are written and philosophical dissertations made."

A fourth form is musical manifestation. Little children who know nothing of music have been known to play skilfully upon all manner of instruments. Musical instruments play themselves and the bows of violins move over the strings without being touched by a visible hand.

A fifth form of the physical is materialization. The spirit assumes human form. You recognize one or two of your departed loved ones and can touch and talk with them. They usually appear in flowing robes, and pieces have been cut from the garment which, in a short time, melt away. There was a schoolgirl by the name of Florence Cook. She was a remarkable medium, and the spirit who operated through her was known as Katie King. Sir William Crookes, the celebrated chemist, after seeing many marvelous things in séances with this girl, asked her to come to his laboratory and she consented. Here, Dr. Crookes says, he saw the spirit of Katie King materialize scores of times. He photographed this spirit forty times with five different cameras; he talked with the spirit; clasped it and found it to be a real, living woman. He says that every scientific test was applied to eliminate the possibility of fraud, and all of these experiments were confirmed by other equally prom-

inent scientific men who were present. What shall we do with these facts? We must adopt a theory big enough to include them all—and we shall.

The sixth and final kind of physical manifestation is spirit-photography. Mr. William Howitt declares that he made a visit to the studio of the celebrated Mr. Hudson and received two photographs, perfect and unmistakable, of his two sons who had died some years before. Everything was said to have been done scientifically and without the slightest chance for deception.

So much for physical manifestations. Prof. Wallace then mentions five kinds of mental phenomena:

Automatic Writing. This is connected with that popular article known as the ouija board. This is a board on which stands a small, triangular table, having three legs. On the board are printed the letters of the alphabet, the figures from one to ten, and the three words: "Yes," "No," and "Good-bye." Two or more persons sit about this board, their finger-tips resting lightly on the table while they ask questions. The answers are given by the words which are spelled out as the table-leg at the apex of the triangle touches the letters one by one. So it was that Mrs. John Curran, of St. Louis, learned of the existence of Patience Worth, who has composed so many wonderful poems in Old English dialect. One day the ouija board spelled out: "Many moons ago I lived. Again I come. Patience Worth my name."

Clairvoyance is another method. The medium

will see, in the trance state, the form of some person unknown to her and will describe him (or her) so distinctly that the loved ones recognize the picture.

Trance-speaking is a third. The medium goes into a trance and then, in his speech, displays marvelous knowledge far beyond his own natural powers. For example, Professor Wallace says he has heard an ignorant bartender discourse most beautifully on subjects of psychology, and hold his own in an argument with a party of philosophers on reason and foreknowledge and such profound and unfathomable themes. On the other hand, Mrs. Piper, in an issue of the *New York Herald* for October, 1901, published the following confession: "I never heard of anything said by myself during a trance that might not have been latent in my own mind, or in the mind of the person in charge of the sitting or of the one trying to get the communication, or in the mind of some living person." When Mrs. Piper later desired to resume her work as a medium, she did not continue to be equally frank, but that does not diminish the significance of her former admissions.

Impersonation is a fourth method. Eusapia Paladino, the Italian woman who has become so famous as a medium, says that the beginning of her remarkable work was a message from the spirit world to the effect that John King desired to incarnate himself in the body of the medium called "Eusapia," if she were willing. It was the first time she had ever heard of John King, but she

welcomed him. He was with her at the next sitting and has never left her since. She could not do without his aid. He calls her his daughter and claims that he was her real father in a previous existence on earth. When she calls him, saying: "Come, my father, come," he never fails her. This is the testimony of the most remarkable woman medium in the modern world.

The final method of manifestation is healing. Any movement which brings healing into its category will win success in the twentieth century, and Spiritualism does this. The medium either heals by mesmeric power or in a trance will discover the remedy for some disease.

Such is a brief survey of the leading methods of spirit manifestation as catalogued for us by Sir Alfred Russell Wallace.

It may serve as an appropriate conclusion to quote from a writer in the *Daily Mail* of London, a few years ago. "London is medium-mad," he says, and then goes on to tell how many new disciples occultism has gained. "The popular mediums are overcrowded with clients. In fact, they are in so great demand that they specialize! One makes a specialty of slate-writing, another of materializations, another of clairvoyancy." He says that they follow inquirers with spies from place to place (and after dismissing them with a few commonplace observations) get all the information possible before astonishing them on their second visit with their wonderful knowledge of the future life.

When all due allowance has been made for de-

ception and trickery, however, there still remains, in the manifestations we have spoken of, an area of enchanted ground. To be honest, we must adopt a hypothesis big enough to cover all the facts in the case, and this we shall try to do in another chapter.

Supposing, for the sake of argument, that communion between this life and the new is possible, and that all the claims of Spiritism regarding the visits of the spirits should be true, is this one fact religion? Religion, in our common understanding of the term, is the consciousness of God, the redemption from sin through Christ Jesus, joy and peace in the Holy Ghost, service in the world. Does Spiritism give us this? Not at all. At present it is merely a matter of scientific research, but not of religious faith. Sir William Barrett, for example, has told us that psychical research is quite distinct from religion. Conan Doyle admits this is true; yet he says that the results of psychical research, the lessons we learn and the deductions we draw are to him the very essence of religion. Whether this traffic with the unseen is conducive to growth in grace and whether it furnishes the motive power to help us on in our pilgrim way, we shall learn in the study on the Ouija Board.

## X

### CHRISTIANS AND THE OUIJA BOARD

*“Hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, . . . for they prophesy a lie unto you.”—JEREMIAH 27:9-10.*

NE year, about Christmas time, one of the daily papers told us that the Yule-tide would probably be the most prodigal Christmas that civilization had ever known, but (the writer went on to add) it would not be the happiest. After tracing some of the sources of misery, he informed us that the most popular of all gifts that year would be ouija boards, by which debutantes might peer into the future. “It is quite the correct thing (he said) for a society girl to have a spirit guide who acts as a sort of celestial chaperone for her, and supplies the motive power, likewise the spiritual hunches at the ouija board meetings.” It is certainly true that the world was in a furor of mysticism and the big department stores were at their wits’ end to supply the demand for these spook boards. One who reads such an account as this would get the impression that this was a fad—which it certainly was—and that it was some new thing under the sun; but history has a way of turning over the

pages as we exalt some new discovery, and showing us that even before our forefathers were born, the thing itself was hoary with age.

This is certainly true in the case of the ouija board, as a glance into Roman history will show. The Roman historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, who lived during the fourth century A. D., gives an account of certain politicians in the reign of Valens. They became anxious as to their prospects under the next ruler and set themselves to discovering who the next Emperor was to be, resorting to what we should call the ouija board to gain the much-coveted information. The officers of Valens kept themselves informed of these secret doings, however, and two of these inquirers, Hilarius and Patricius, were tortured, as a result of which they made the confession Marcellinus records in his book.

The account goes on to state that a little table was constructed of laurel twigs in the form of the Delphic tripod, and after it had been consecrated with chanted imprecations and with much dancing in a ring about it, it was at length gotten into operation.

The method of operation was as follows: it was placed in the midst of an apartment purified by Arabian incense. A circular plate, composed of different metals, was laid upon it, upon the margin of whose circumference were engraved the twenty-four letters of the Roman alphabet, separated from each other by accurately measured spaces. Over this table stood one skilled in ritual science. He

was robed in linen vestments, his feet shod with linen sandals, a turban about his head and in his hand the boughs of a tree of good omen. The spirit from whom the response was expected was propitiated by appropriate hymns or chants. The master of ceremonies had suspended from a wand in his hand a ring made of finest Carpathian thread, which would dart forth a regular intervals and strike upon a particular letter which attracted it. In this manner it would spell out the answer to the questions asked of it.

The men under examination went on to state that they were gathered in a house, inquiring of the table or board who should be the next Emperor. The ring darted to the rim of the plate and had already touched the two syllables: "The-o" with the final addition of the letter "D" when one of those present exclaimed that Theodorus was pointed out by the decree of fate. The result of the old fourth century Roman séance was that Theodorus was arrested and executed, along with many others whose names began with "Theod." Later Valens was defeated by the Goths and he was succeeded by Theodosius as Emperor of the East. As in the case of other occultists, the reply was vague and might have fitted any one of a number of individuals. This table may be regarded, doubtless, as the legitimate ancestor of the present ouija board, the principle being exactly the same, only the form being slightly different. Just how far back beyond the fourth century this particular form of sorcery extends

we do not know, but the thing itself was condemned back in the code of Hammurabi and all through the Old Testament Scriptures. It is evident, therefore, that the ouija board is no modern invention and that this twentieth century fad is merely a revival of the fourth century delusion.

Coming down to the present time, the ouija board is just one form by which messages come from the unseen world. It is a board on which stands a small, triangular table with three legs. On the board are printed the letters of the alphabet, the figures one to ten and the words "yes," "no," and "good-bye." Two or more persons sit about the board, their fingers resting lightly on the table, while they ask questions. The answers are spelled out by the table-leg at the apex of the triangle, the table moving about (it is supposed) at the propulsion of the spirit and thus touching the letters, figures or words. One of the advertisements says that "many people have demonstrated that this wonderful talking-board is the link that connects the living with the spirits of those who have gone before." Harvey O'Higgins says that apparently it is as easy to get messages from the dead on the ouija board as to get messages from the living on the telephone; . . . the mystery of survival after death has been solved and the sphinx has spoken.

Our theme concerns the dangers to Christians in the use of the ouija board. Let us consider some of them in turn:

*I. There is the Danger of Deception: the Whole Thing May Be Explained by the Automatic Action of the Subconscious Mind*

We human beings are wonderful creatures. We are so much more wonderful than we know. Ordinarily our hand obeys our will and naturally, when we see it moving the planchette and spelling out words which were not in our mind, we are surprised. Many jump at once to the conclusion that it is moved by some discarnate spirit, but let us look before we leap.

Are you ever absent-minded? Do you ever put your hand in your pocket for your latch-key when you mount the stairs to some public building, just because the door looks like your own? Have you ever dipped your pen in the mucilage bottle? What are these lapses but automatic actions directed by what psychology calls the "subconscious mind"? There are several ways of digging down into this subconscious self, and one of them is by automatic writing. Certain persons possess the faculty of this kind of writing. If a pencil is placed in the hand of such a person and is allowed to rest on a piece of paper, and if the person removes his attention from his hand by reading a book or engaging in conversation, presently the pencil between his fingers begins to write, tracing words and sentences which have no relation at all to the book or the conversation. It is just as if some other person were writing. The person himself does not know what has been written until the writing is inspected. Sometimes it is found that this hypnotic or trance

writing brings to light incidents read years ago which had been entirely forgotten by the conscious mind, but which had been stored up in the reservoir of the subconscious. The ouija board or planchette is merely an adjunct to facilitate the process of automatic writing. It is not a necessary ingredient but merely a help. Consequently, the movements which the ouija board makes may be directed by the subconscious mind of the operator or may be affected by the subconscious minds of those present through telepathy.

F. W. Myers, in his book, *Human Personality and Its Survival After Bodily Death*, tells of a séance in which the operators of the ouija board were placed out of sight of the company who, in silence, selected a photograph from an album and fixed their attention upon it. Presently the ouija board began to spell out either the name or initials of the person whose photograph had been selected, or else it wrote out some characteristic feature descriptive of the picture. Out of five cases, three were correctly identified. Now, what was this? Evidently telepathy: the transference of thought from the mind of the company to the subconscious mind of the operators.

Is there anything wrong in this? It is a very fascinating experiment in applied psychology and would seem to call for no condemnation from the pulpit. I have placed it first because I think it is the smallest danger we shall consider. I simply call it the danger of deception, for unless we know these wonderful acts of the subconscious, we may

jump to the conclusion that spirits are at work when it may be simply ourselves.

*II. There is the Danger of Doubt: the Loss of Faith in God by Trying to Read the Future for Ourselves by Mechanical Means*

Coulson Kernahan calls it "spiritual house-breaking." He says that if God has locked the door which separates this life from the next, to attempt to pick the lock of that door seems not far removed from something like spiritual house-breaking. I think he is right. God evidently had some purpose in hiding the future and other mysteries from us. As the Scripture says: "Secret things belong unto the Lord, but the things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children." Now, the Bible evidently makes a distinction between secret things and revealed things, and mortal man has no right to wipe out the distinction or to break down the door between the two.

Sir Henry Lunn, in a very able address on Spiritualism, quotes Sir A. Conan Doyle as saying: "Nearly every woman is an undeveloped medium; let her try her powers of automatic writing." Lunn then proceeds to comment upon this as follows:

"There can be nothing more pernicious for our nation than that sorrowing women, instead of seeking in quiet waiting upon God for the comfort which He gave the sorrowing sisters of Bethany . . . should seek by the wretched mechanism of planchettes and by automatic writing to penetrate the mysteries which God in His

wisdom has veiled from humanity. This way lies madness."

Here are the words of one who is a medical man as well as a Christian, and when he says: "This way lies madness," we may well heed.

But now comes the question: Is the ouija board or any other avenue into the unknown able to prophesy for us the future? There is a divinely appointed test given in Isaiah 41:21-23.

"Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth and show us what shall happen; let them show the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Shew us the things that are to come hereafter that we may know that ye are gods; yea, do good or do evil that we may be dismayed and behold it together."

God, through the Old Testament prophets, has time and again met this test Himself. Only see how wonderfully many of the Old Testament prophecies have been fulfilled. Egypt has become the "basest of kingdoms;" Nineveh is "empty, void and waste;" Babylon is "a desolate heap;" Tyre has become "like to the top of a rock." These and other words of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Nahum have been marvelously made good. It is unlikely that Spiritualism can produce their equal. Spiritism can tell us of things past or present, but not future. God has decreed that "what may be

on the morrow, our foresight cannot see." Even Jesus Himself stated that neither he nor the angels in heaven knew the day of the end of the world. If that is so, these hidden spirits (if such there be) must be wiser than Jesus of Nazareth.

Now, this is a fair question: If the secrets of this life are withheld from us for good and sufficient reasons, may we not suppose that God is actuated by love for us and a desire for our best interests by hiding from us what is to happen after death? When Lazarus came back, he said nothing about the future life. When the young man of Nain and the daughter of Jairus came to life, they were equally silent. When Jesus came from the tomb He spoke about the Kingdom of God, but not about His own happiness in the great beyond. Sir Oliver Lodge, the noted modern spiritualist, does not attribute foreknowledge to the dead. He says: "I do not understand how anticipation of the future is possible; I do not dogmatize; I try to keep an open mind," but, he added, "prognostication can hardly be part of the evidence for survival."

### *III. There is the Danger of Degradation*

On March 5, 1920, one of our great daily papers had an article with the following headlines:

"OUIJA FANATICS Go To ASYLUM.

Spirit Board Worship Results in Irrationality.

Crazed Devotees Offered Human Hair as Sacrifice.

Girl is Stripped to Appear Control of the Device."

Then the article went on to tell how seven persons

had been so enthralled over the ouija board that they had just concluded a twenty-four-hours' séance in which they had neglected food and sleep until their emaciation showed in their faces. Four of these persons were committed to the State Hospital for the insane, and three men were released who testified that they had tried to induce the women to desist from their ouija board invocations, but in vain. One of these—a thirteen-year-old girl—was in such a mental condition that the magistrate said she must be watched carefully if her reason was to be saved. The people were arrested after protest by the neighbors, who said that children had been taken into the house and their hair shorn as a result of sacrifices demanded by the board. The police had to break down the door in order to arrest the occupants, and they found that several bank-notes had been burned as part of the ouija rites. Money to the amount of twenty dollars was destroyed, including all bills which bore the number "seven" in their serial numbers. Furniture, clothing and jewelry were thrown into the fire and most of the clothing stripped from a young girl in a mad effort to appease the god of the planchette.

Of course you may say that extremes like this occur only among ignorant people. To answer that I turn to a great university. On January 30, 1920, a member of its faculty, hearing that two young women in his class had been obliged to leave school and place themselves in the hands of nerve specialists because of their devotion to the ouija board,

stated that these strange boards were becoming more plentiful in the fraternity houses and society homes of the students than Bibles or prayer-books, and were more frequently consulted. Another member of the faculty corroborated this and added: "To my mind, the lure of the ouija is becoming a serious menace in this country."

Bishop Frodsham was asked by a medical man who has charge of a large institution for the treatment of mental diseases to make an earnest and urgent appeal, warning people of the danger of attempting to institute a sort of telephonic connection with the other world. He stated that a growing number of his patients were those who had sought comfort for sorrow by the various methods of Spiritism which are so common today. Another authority has made a still more urgent protest against those who encourage mourners and young people to develop certain automatic processes such as are required for the use of the planchette, and who lead these young people to assume that such processes have some connection with the departed. There was the case of Annie Moore Cable, who became interested in spiritualistic communications through a ouija board brought home one evening. She found that through its use apparently real spirits talked with her. Her father has written the sad story of her degradation in a pamphlet which tells how she had ultimately to be taken to an asylum. He testifies that during seven years of investigation he has learned of one hundred and fifty cases where minds have been ruined by it. A

lady in Illinois told him of her husband, who was in an insane asylum. Her father-in-law, who was a spiritualist, came to visit them. He and the son secured a ouija board and went up-stairs to consult the spirits. In two weeks her husband had to be taken to an asylum, leaving at home his wife and four helpless children. Dr. Talmage said once in a sermon that there is not an asylum between Bangor, Maine, and San Francisco, California, which does not contain victims of this delusion. In Long Island a man became absorbed with this fancy and, taking his \$15,000, gave it to a medium in New York and attempted suicide.

Illustrations might be multiplied indefinitely. Those given, however, are sufficient to point the way to the fact I am trying to impress: that when professing Christians begin the apparently innocent game of tampering with the ouija board and its fascinations, they are unwittingly getting on an elevator which goes down instead of up. They are playing with fire. They are starting on a pathway which too often leads to the door of the insane asylum and from there to the door of the grave. This is simple fact and not melodramatic exaggeration, and it brings us to the last point.

#### *IV. There is Danger of Devil Worship*

Sir A. Conan Doyle says that we must either recognize that Spiritism is a new revelation from divine sources, or that there has been an outbreak of lunacy extending over two generations and two great continents, this lunacy assaulting men and

women otherwise eminently sane. No, these are not the only two alternatives. Dr. Biederwolf states that there are three: "Spiritism—deception, divine, or devilish." So, in all these manifestations of the occult, there are the three possibilities. In the matter of the ouija board, perhaps it is all deception, trickery on the part of the medium or delusion on the part of the operator of the board. Then, again, it may be divine. Maybe God's good angels are offering us new light on the problems of life. But a third dim possibility looms before us, especially when the subject is studied in the light of Holy Scripture: it may be that the responses which come are from evil spirits and demons. The fact is that Spiritualism demands a surrender (as a writer in *The Nineteenth Century* put it) of the whole personality. "There can be no half-way measures."

"Herein lies its greatest and most real peril. It is admitted by spiritualists themselves that if you rend the thin veil which separates this world from the next, you have no guarantee as to the character of the personalities which may avail themselves of that rent. You are running an awful risk."

Certainly that is so. How do you know whether the spirits are good or bad which wait upon your call? With the history of the world before you, when you see the three Black I's (as someone has called them) which have often gone hand in hand with Spiritism, (insanity, immorality and infidelity), and when you remember that all this sort of commerce was so strenuously forbidden in the

Bible, you certainly have a pretty strong suspicion that these spirits are the ambassadors of the devil rather than the attendants of the Most High God. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Look at the fruits of the ouija board and then ask what the agency behind it must be.

It is beyond our purpose now to discuss the whole subject of Spiritism. This address merely aims to fling out four red flags, four danger signals, four reasons why Christians should be very slow to take up with the ouija board craze. My final word, then, is that the man who puts his hand on the planchette or ouija board and then waits for some other power than his own will to move him, is opening the way for evil spirits to use him. The man who submits to hypnotism gives over his will to the will of another, and thus weakens his own powers of resistance. After he has permitted this familiarity from a man, he is open to the same mastery by an evil spirit. Surely a Christian, who is a free man in Christ Jesus, ought to be very slow to acknowledge the mastery of any spirit except that of his Lord. We recall how the devil offered Jesus Christ all the kingdoms of this world if He would fall down and worship him. Jesus knew He would have the world ultimately—but He wanted to get it in the Father's way and not by any of the short-cuts of the Evil One. He declined the offer with scorn. In much the same way today the Christian is offered the secrets of the unknown by the evil spirit, but ought he not rather to prefer to get them in God's way? Jesus said: "In that day

ye shall ask me no question." Many questions can wait until we see Him face to face.

*"I know not where His islands lift  
Their fronded palms in air.  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond His love and care."*

*"I know not what the future hath  
Of marvel or surprise,  
Assured alone that life and death  
His mercy underlies.*

*"And so beside the silent sea  
I wait the muffled oar:  
No harm from Him can come to me  
On ocean or on shore.*

*"And Thou, O Lord, by whom are seen  
Thy creatures as they be,  
Forgive me if too close I lean  
My human heart on Thee."*

## XI

### SHALL WE RECOGNIZE OUR LOVED ONES IN HEAVEN?

*"I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."*—MATTHEW 8:11.

 HAVE found more general interest in this topic than in any other subject in the series of studies on the future life. After all, the main question people are asking about heaven is not where it is geographically, or what it is like theologically, but shall we know John and Mary there? It is a very practical question. Unless father and mother and brother and sister will be there, why should we want to go? We have no desire to spend eternity as strangers in a strange land.

*"What is this life? And what to us is death?  
Whence came we? Whither go? And where are those  
Who in a moment stricken from our side  
Passed to that land of shadow and repose?  
Are they all dead? And dead must we become?  
Or are they living in some unknown clime?  
Shall we regain them in that far-off home,  
And live again beyond the shores of time?"*

These are the questions which torn hearts are asking, and they deserve a fair answer. There is something about love that never lets go, that

doesn't stop at death, and from the way we keep on loving the one who is gone, we are naturally led to ask if we shall see him again. In the beautiful Greek drama of *Ion*, when the hero is about to yield his life to the stern demands of fate, his sweetheart, Clemantha, asks if they shall meet again, to which he replies: "I have asked that dreadful question of the hills that look eternal—of the clear streams that flow forever. All were dumb—but as I gaze upon thy living face I feel there is something in the love that mantles through its beauty that cannot wholly perish. We shall meet again, Clemantha."

*Let us now survey the Scriptural basis of the doctrine of recognition in heaven:*

(1) Heaven is described in the Bible as a place of association and communion. John, Paul and Jesus use different words to describe heaven. John speaks of it in terms of a city and a throne. Paul, with his thorn in the flesh, regards it as a place of freedom from the limitations of earth. And Jesus calls it His Father's house or home. But you observe that they all use terms which imply association and recognition. How can you have a city where everybody is a stranger to everybody else? That wouldn't be a city, but a wilderness. And certainly you can't have a home where nobody has a bowing acquaintance with anybody else. Far from it. The very idea of a home implies the intimate acquaintance of family life.

Now, the Christian idea of God is a social one.

The idea of the Trinity is a social idea. The three Persons of the Godhead presumably enjoy heavenly converse with one another. And if we shall be like Him when we see Him as He is, we shall presumably enjoy high and holy association with the spirits of just men made perfect.

Take, for example, the image of a banquet which Jesus uses so beautifully. He says that pilgrims shall come from the east and the west, the north and the south and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God to eat and drink at the Master's table. Whether you take this figuratively or literally, certainly the idea of social intercourse is there; for such festal meetings in the Orient were occasions for the freest social converse. As Master and guests reclined together on couches around the board, friend met friend with genial intimacy.

This idea is carried still further when Jesus speaks of those who are excluded from the fellowship of the blest. He says that there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when they see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets of God admitted, but find themselves thrust out. If these words mean anything, they mean that the lost will recognize the patriarchs and the prophets and will realize how much they themselves miss in being deprived of such society as theirs. Well, if they know these great leaders, it would seem they would recognize their own beloved whom they knew best of all.

(2) The doctrine of recognition in heaven seems

to be clearly implied by certain incidents recorded in Scripture.

Only once in the New Testament is the curtain lifted which separates between this life and the next. That is in the strange story of Dives and Lazarus. Whether this be a parable or not, the teaching is that the rich man, Lazarus and Abraham, all mutually recognize one another. Neither Dives nor Lazarus had known Abraham on earth, and yet somehow they intuitively know him in the world beyond.

Or, take that strange tale of Samuel and Saul in the Old Testament narrative. You remember how Saul felt himself in need of counsel as the Philistines surged against him and how, when he could get no help from the Lord, he bethought him of his old counsellor, Samuel. The story tells how he went in the dead of night to the witch of Endor and how he said, "Bring me up Samuel." It is a difficult story to interpret, but it certainly implies that Saul knew Samuel. Samuel had been dead for years, and yet his residence in the spiritual world had not so changed him but that the king recognized his old friend.

Or, turn again to the case of the Transfiguration. Here on the mountain-top appeared Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus. Now, Moses had been dead fifteen centuries and Elijah some nine hundred years, and yet prophet and lawgiver were known immediately, the same characters as they had been on earth. Death can do a good deal, but it evidently cannot change character. These three

persons recognize each other and they talk with Jesus of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.

The Transfiguration story gives us the right to hope that we shall recognize all the saints and apostles and patriarchs whose names dot the Bible page. Some time since I read a delightful letter which Dr. Lewis Gould, a Baptist minister, wrote to Dr. Augustus Strong, of Rochester Seminary, from the hospital just before an operation which proved fatal. He said that he was ready for whatever might happen and assuming that he was going to die, he invited Dr. Strong to his residence in heaven. "Come and see me. I expect to reside at the corner of Jerusalem and Jericho Streets. I wish you and Mrs. Strong might be in the next block. Let us make the rounds together. We will call on Moses and ask him how he wrote the first chapter of Genesis. We will ask Joshua how he made the sun and moon stand still. And Saul, how he was a man of God and then wasn't. And David, why he didn't let Bathsheba alone, and Isaiah, how he happened to be two, and Jonah, if he was the first submarine navigator, and Daniel, how he felt when he first saw the lions, and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, if they had an asbestos suit on, etc." So he goes on in a tone of gentle humor, but maybe he was more than half right, after all.

(3) The idea of recognition in heaven seems to be involved in the very constitution of the soul.

Scripture says very little about the kind of body we are to have in the future life. Hence we must

not depend on our bodily appearance for recognition of each other over yonder. The fact is that we recognize one another by other things than bodies, even now. My friend recognizes my voice over the phone and calls me by name, though he cannot see my face at all. My personality somehow expresses itself in my voice and he recognizes that. Someone has used this illustration: Imagine a company of friends gathered together one evening in a room enjoying the old-fashioned art of conversation. Then conceive that by some miracle the physical body of every person present disappears and yet the interplay of wit and humor, the sparkling talk goes on. This, he says, may give some hint of how spiritual society will be enjoyed in the life beyond. The body is secondary, the spirit, the character, the personality is the primary and important thing.

Personality is what survives death. Now, memory is an essential part of personality. Psychology tells us, according to some scholars, that the subconscious mind is the soul, and if the soul is immortal, the unconscious mind of each of us is immortal. This subconscious mind has a perfect memory of every experience of human life. If this is true, surely our souls will remember the man and woman we used to be and the folks we used to know. Surely we can identify them somehow, aside from bodily resemblances. The old hymn says, "We shall know each other better when the mists have rolled away." The Bible says we shall shine as the stars forever and ever, and Paul tells us that

no two stars are alike, for one star differs from another star in glory;—hence it would seem that each of us shall continue to be himself and to recognize other selves.

In Matthew's account of the crucifixion of Christ he says that there was such a convulsion of nature when Jesus died that “many bodies of the saints who slept arose and came out of the graves after his resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared unto many.” This language certainly means that they were recognized by those to whom they appeared.

This blessed hope has sprung up in the hearts of many who didn't have the solid Word of God on which to base it. One of the old Roman orators exclaimed one day in an impassioned address, “Oh, renowned day when I shall have reached the divine assemblage of those minds with which I have congenial predilections and shall escape this uncongenial throng.” A Roman poet had the same idea in mind when he said, “We but depart to meet our *Æneas* and our *Tully* and our *Ancus*.” The same old-world cry is repeated in the language of today.

(4) The idea of recognition in heaven is involved in Christ's promise that we shall be as the angels in heaven.

You recall the incident narrated in Matthew 22. The Sadducees, who were deniers of any future life, thought to make the doctrine ridiculous by supposing an absurd case. They came to Jesus with the tale of seven brothers who had successively had the same wife. The question was,

whose wife should she be in the future state. Jesus, in reply, told them they were very foolish, for they evidently didn't know the Scripture teaching on the subject, because in the resurrection life we shall not be marrying as on earth, but shall be as the angels of God in heaven. This seems to me to mean that we shall not have the same bodily constitution we have on earth, but shall communicate as spirits.

The question we now face is—do the angels recognize one another? We know that there are different ranks and orders of angels. They have their peculiar and distinctive names. There is Satan, who is also called Apollyon, Belial or Beelzebub. Then there is the Archangel Michael spoken of repeatedly by Daniel and others. Then there is Gabriel, who appeared to Zacharias. These exalted beings evidently know one another, for Jude says that on one occasion Michael the Archangel disputed with Satan about the body of Moses. It is not conceivable that these two antagonists were ranged against each other and yet were unknown each to each.

Isaiah gives a very dramatic picture of the coming of the King of Babylon to the nether world of despair. He tells how the kings of the nations will rise up from their thrones and welcome this latest arrival and how they will exclaim in surprise, "Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave." Now, if the inhabitants of Hades recognize the King of Babylon, there must be universal

recognition in the life to come, both of evil and of good spirits. The Book of Revelation pictures the celestial beings as recognizing one another, just as Isaiah pictures evil powers as doing. Wonderful and inspiring thought it is—of the angels as they wheel in serried ranks before the throne and of the spirits of the blest made perfect in holiness, as they enjoy the presence of God to all eternity.

*“We speak of the land of the blest,  
A country so bright and so fair;  
And oft are its glories confess,  
But what must it be to be there!*

*“We speak of its peace and its love,  
The robes which the glorified wear;  
The songs of the blessed above,  
But what must it be to be there!*

*“Dear Lord, midst our pleasure or woe  
For heaven our spirit prepare;  
Then shortly we also shall know  
And feel what it is to be there!”*

(5) The doctrine of recognition in heaven is still further suggested by the disclosures of the Judgment Day.

The thought of the great assize, the Day of Judgment which is on ahead, has largely passed from the attention of the modern world. Men seem so occupied with the love of God as to give scant attention to the justice of God. And yet the Bible makes abundantly clear the fact that there is a great day coming when all who have ever lived shall be assembled before the Lord. “Before him shall be gathered all nations.” We are told that

the books will be opened and the dead will be judged according to those things which are written in the books. The Master Himself has promised that He will confess before His Father's face the names of all who confess Him before men. Now, if individual punishments and rewards are meted out to those to whom they are due, surely individuality endures and surely we shall be able to recognize those who are thus rewarded or punished.

I remember one of the most terrifying thoughts to me as a child was that of this great assize. I thought I could hear God reading out of His book all the bad things I ever had done and I feared that my cheeks should blush for shame as my sins were published in the ears of angels and men. But as I grew older I felt more and more comforted in the fact that Jesus had promised to protect from the examination those who had put their cause in His hands. And the hymn I learned as a lad gave me comfort as I pondered it over and over.

*“I’m not ashamed to own my Lord  
Or to defend His cause;  
Maintain the honor of His word,  
The glory of His cross.”*

*“Then will He own my worthless name  
Before His Father’s face,  
And in the New Jerusalem,  
Appoint my soul a place.”*

(6) The final argument for recognition in heaven is taken from the appearances of Christ after His resurrection.

What sort of body did Jesus have when He rose

from the dead? It was His glorified body. Well, was it like His previous body? Apparently it was like it and yet different from it. Mary Magdalene did not recognize Him at first, but did later on. The disciples on the Emmaus road did not recognize Him while He walked with them, but did so after He had gone. Mary recognized His voice, though she didn't recognize His body. When Christ appeared in vision to Saul on the Damascus road, Saul didn't recognize Him, but on hearing the voice from above was willing to believe that it was Jesus who spoke. So as we put together the facts dealing with our Lord's glorified body, we come to the conclusion that it was somewhat like the former body and somewhat different from it. Yet we find that in almost every case Jesus is able to make the disciples know that He is their risen Saviour.

What about our own future bodies? The epistle tells us that Christ will change our vile bodies and make them like unto His own glorified body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. This means, then, that we can make ourselves recognizable to our friends—that we can commune and communicate with them in the long days to come, while the years of eternity roll.

Such, in brief, is the Scriptural basis for the doctrine of heavenly recognition. We have attempted in this study to show that we have solid foundations for this faith and this hope. How great the difference between pagan and Christian

ideals on this subject will be seen by the following comparison. In the eleventh book of the *Odyssey* we find the Homeric idea of immortality. The hero makes a journey to the underworld in which the spirits of the departed come out to meet him. He first meets the spirit of the man, Elpenor, whose body lay still unburied. "I wept to see him and pitied him from my heart." Next came the spirit of his dead mother. "She knew me instantly," he says, and he goes on to tell us that he yearned to clasp his mother and thrice his heart urged him to embrace her, but thrice she flitted from his arms like a shadow or dream, and the sharp pain about his heart grew only more. "Like a dream," he says, "the spirit flies away." Then the spirit of Agamemnon came and the warrior stretched forth his eager hand to grasp the hand of his friend, but there was no strength or vigor left. So the story goes on—it is a sorry picture. No wonder that one of the dead says to the visitor that he would rather be the hireling of a stranger than to be the ruler over all these dead and gone. How different the scene the Bible gives of that glad reunion of loved ones on the other side! It is in its light that we sing

*"So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still  
Will lead me on  
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till  
The night is gone;  
And with the morn those angel faces smile,  
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile."*



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